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Van and Hitomi have come to the end of their journey, but the final showdown with Dornkirk is not going as planned! It will take their combined strength to see beyond the battle and back to the very start of Gaea. All secrets are revealed and all battles completed in this final, shocking volume of *The Vision of Escaflowne*.

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THE VISION OF
ESCAFLOWNE
BASED ON THE HIT ANIME SERIES!
Katsu Aki
8
Original Concept by Hajime Yatate & Shoji Kawamori

天空のエスカフローネ

ESCAFLOWNE

8

漫画 克・亜樹

原作 矢立肇／河森正治

スタジオぬえ

THE VISION OF ESCAFLOWNE

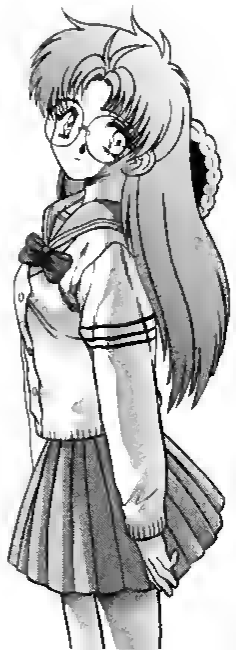
Volume 8

By

KATSU AKI

Original concept
by
HAJIME YATATE
SHOJI KAWAMORI
(STUDIO NUE)

TOKYOPOP
HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO



THE VISION OF ESCAFLOWNE

INTRODUCTION

"Tenkuu no Escaflowne" ("Escaflowne of the Heavens," or "The Vision of Escaflowne" in North America) began as a story in the minds of Hajime Yatate and Shoji Kawamori, brilliant creators who planned Hitomi's epic tale to appear as an animated television series. While most anime series begin as manga, Escaflowne's two manga series were built off the ideas developed for the anime. Yuzuru Yashiro's shojo, or "girls'" manga, is two volumes in length. In contrast, Katsu Aki's shonen, or "boys'" manga, is much longer and happens to be the version you now hold in your hands.

Aki-sensei handled both the art and writing for this title, and it was actually the first version of Escaflowne to reach the public. While based on the concept of the anime, it began its serialization before the anime was complete. This version of the Escaflowne tale has a different flavor from the television series, with more action, tweaked character design, and an altered story. As a result, it is difficult to closely compare the two—they are simply two different versions of Hitomi's adventures. Escaflowne's versatility has always fetched great praise over the years. Its manga counterparts only expand the work's reach and deepen its universe. With that in mind, please put aside all preconceptions you may have as you sit back, relax, and enjoy this new look at the world of Escaflowne as you've never seen it before.

Lianne Sentar, April 2003

Special thanks to Egan Loo and his Escaflowne Compendium (http://www.anime.net/escaflowne/)

The Vision of Escaflowne Vol. 8

Katsu Aki

Original concept by Hajime Yatate and Shoji Kawamori (Studio Nue)

Translation - Naomi Kokubo
English Adaptation - Lianne Sentar
Associate Editor - Tim Beedle
Retouch and Lettering - Eric Botero
Production Artist - John Lo
Cover Design - Raymond Makowski

Editor - Rob Tokar
Digital Imaging Manager - Chris Buford
Pre-Press Manager - Antonio DePietro
Production Managers - Jennifer Miller and Mutsumi Miyazaki
Art Director - Matt Alford
Managing Editor - Jill Freshney
VP of Production - Ron Klamert
President and C.O.O. - John Parker
Publisher and C.E.O. - Stuart Levy

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TOKYOPOP Inc.
5900 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 2000
Los Angeles, CA 90036

E-mail: info@TOKYOPOP.com
Come visit us online at www.TOKYOPOP.com

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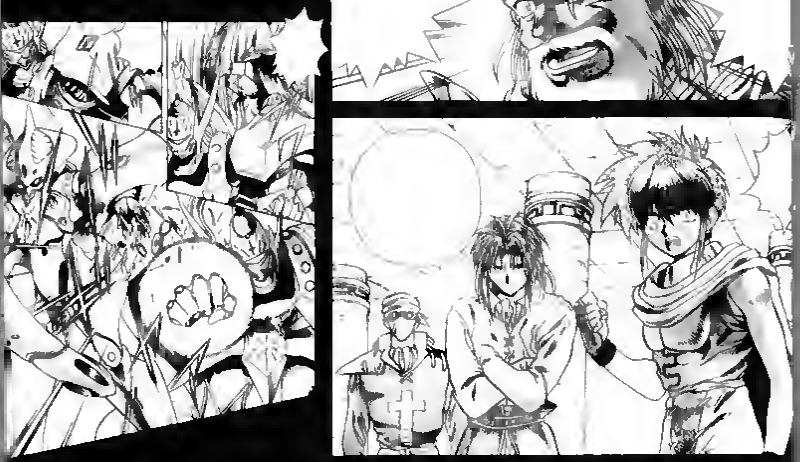

The Story Thus Far

Ages ago, young, powerful beings from Earth used a mighty Ark to leave their homeworld and come to the planet Gaea. Gaea was supposed to be a paradise and the young colonists planned to use the planet's uniquely mysterious mineral–known as Energist–to make themselves gods. Unfortunately, even for would-be deities, things can still go horribly wrong.

After crashing onto Gaea, the colonists realized the planet was far from a paradise–it was actually a world in great pain. Vowing to somehow heal Gaea, they split into three groups and went their separate ways. Some went to what would eventually become known as the Holy Spring of Ubdo. Others went to the areas that would become known as Shrine and Land. Most of the colonists' souls came to inhabit pieces of Energist on the planet's surface, though none of this is widely known to the general populace.

ESCAFLOWNE VOL.0

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Emergence of the First Commander

FINAL Vision 89

Dreams of a World

VOLUME 4

Arriving at the Forest of Deception, Van finds himself tormented by images of his mother's murder at the hands of Oilandau. Consumed by thoughts of revenge, his quest for justice hits a snag–or more precisely, a pair of them. Despite their beauty and their flirty personalities, Shilha and Colt are two of the most formidable pilots in all of Zaibach. Under orders to capture Hitomi and Escaflowne, they're not about to let Van stand in their way. However, leaders on both sides are taken aback when mysterious forces send Hitomi back to Earth. While Hitomi gradually readjusts to her life at home, her allies and enemies both plot to bring her back. But will she return to Fanelia...or Zaibach?

VOLUME 5

Hitomi and Van have become quite adept at piloting Escaflowne, and have soundly defeated some of Zaibach's most ruthless warriors. However, they've never faced an opponent like Admiral Zongi and his Demon Machine. Devoted, driven and completely relentless, the Admiral will not back down, even if it costs him his life. Meanwhile, there's trouble in Asturia, as Allen's actions bring violent repercussions to his king and countrymen. Placed in command after a devastating attack on her father, Princess Millerna must put aside her feelings for Allen and do what's best for her people...even if it means ordering the execution of the man she loves.

VOLUME 6

At long last, Prince Van confronts Dilandau Albatou, the brutal captain who murdered his mother. Could this maniacal impaler really just be a misunderstood soul? Meanwhile, Emperor Dornkirk rallies the forces of Zaibach for an attack on the Duchy of Freid, a peaceful dukedom that also holds the last significant deposit of "super fuel" on Gaea. The Revolutionist's Army, led by Allen's father Noland, will do whatever it takes to defend Freid, but their only hope of victory rests in the hands of a very confused Hitomi!

VOLUME 7

As the dust settles on the Duchy of Freid, the Revolutionist's Army plans its next move. Thanks to the super fuel stolen from Freid, the Zaibach Empire is now ready to begin their conquest of Earth. With time running out and the situation growing bleaker by the moment, Oilandau leads a wing of Revolutionist ships to Zaibach while Hitomi, Van, Allen and Noland race to Paradax, praying they can get there quickly enough to overtake Dornkirk's fleet. It's a desperate, risky mission, as Paradax is an untamed realm fraught with danger, mystery and startling revelations about Gaea's dark past. Secrets are revealed, loyalties are called into question, and Van and Hitomi's feelings for one another continue to grow.

The Story Thus Far (CONT.)

As far as present-day Gaeans are concerned, the colonists (known now only as the Ancients) are gods...and many of the countries and different races on Gaea worship the gods for whom they are named. The people of Fanelia, though named after one of the Ancients, worship the woman whom Fanelia himself adored: Escaflowne. To harness the power of Escaflowne in the defense of the Fanelian people, a giant Knight Machine stands ready. All it needs is a pilot...and a very special energy source.

VOLUME 1

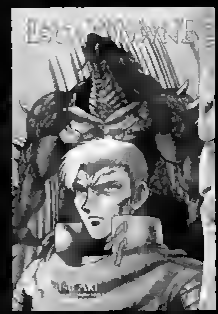
Hitomi Hoshino, a 16-year-old high school student with an interest in mysticism, finds herself in a strange world where the Earth hangs in the sky, and in a strange body that looks like her own but is actually made of Energist. With little ado, the headstrong (and foul-mouthed) Prince Van tells Hitomi she must power Escaflowne, the Knight Machine that is both deity and protector of his homeland, Fanelia. Before Hitomi can get her bearings, Fanelia is flattened by agents of the evil Zaibach Empire and Van's mother, Queen Escalina, is kidnapped by the psychotic Fanelian traitor known as Oilandau!

VOLUME 2

Hitomi, Prince Van, and Asturian Knight Allen Schezar VIII travel to the Holy Spring of Ubdo in an attempt to learn more about Hitomi's mysterious abilities–though some secrets are not to be had without a fight! Meanwhile, survivors of the wrecked kingdom of Fanelia are gearing up for vengeance. The first target of their wrath is the leader who failed to protect them: Prince Van!

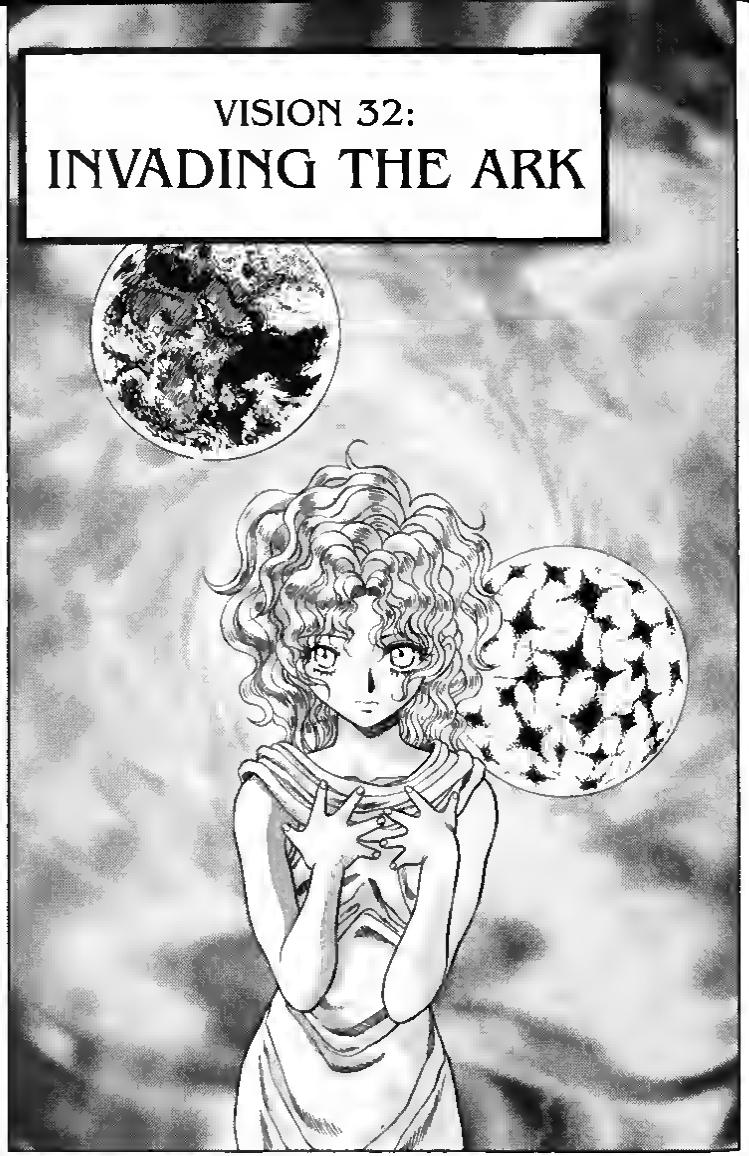
VOLUME 3

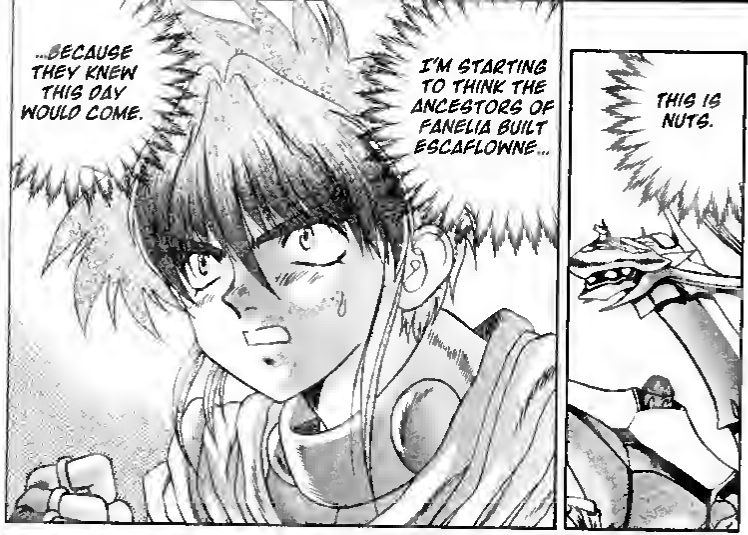
Hitomi, Van, and Fanelian Resistance leader Shian invade the Zaibach Empire, but Van's lust for vengeance costs them their advantage. Hitomi struggles to master her mysterious powers while Van's attempt to rescue his mother is foiled by the unstable Dilandau. Trapped with a madman who's being tortured by visions from the Forest of Deception, Queen Escalina's life hangs by the same slender thread as Dilandau's sanity!

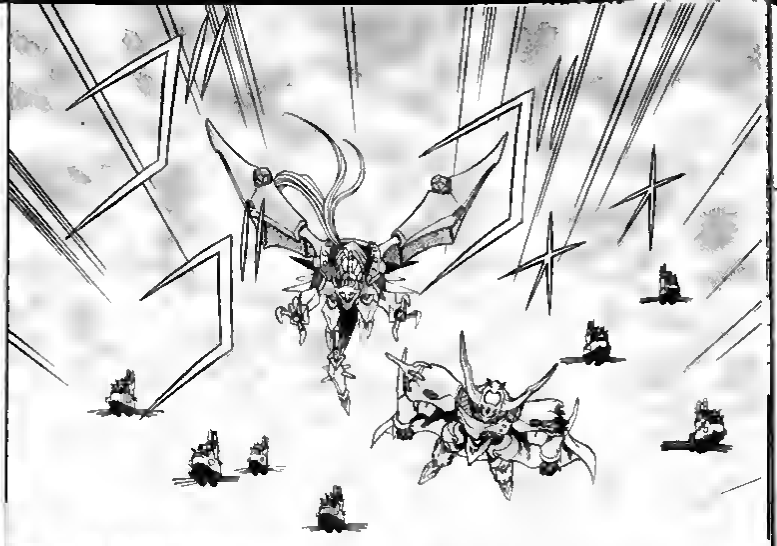


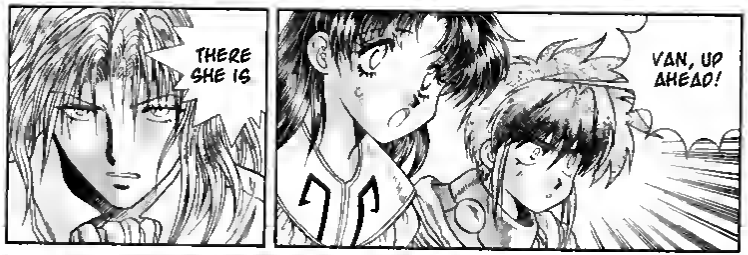
CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS
Betelgas
Opal's Guymelef, a highly advanced Knight Machine
Hitomi
An ordinary girl who loves reading fortunes, Hitomi Hoshino's soul was involuntarily transported from the Earth to Fanelia to be the source of Escaflowne's power.
Opal
Opal is an elite Zaibach warrior dedicated to serving the emperor. He also happens to be a human Energist, but his body hasn't been cooperating of late...
Van
Prince of the Kingdom of Fanelia and pilot of Escaflowne, Van Slanzar de Fanelia seeks vengeance against the Zaibach Empire for destroying his homeland and kidnapping his mother.
Dilandau
Once an Executive Captain of the Zaibach Empire, Dilandau Albatou kidnapped Queen Escalina to learn the secret of the Energist and ended up murdering her. Currently A.W.O.L. from the Revolutionist's Army.
Allen
Head of the Knights Caeli of the Asturian Royal House and pilot of Scherazade, Allen Schezar VIII broke Asturia's non-aggression treaty with the Zaibach Empire by protecting Van and Hitomi.
Dornkirk
The emperor of the Zaibach Empire and the only living Ancient. With Zaibach's technological prowess and harnessed super fuel, Dornkirk's set his sights on Hitomi's Earth.
Escalina
Queen of Fanelia and Van's mother, Escalina was kidnapped by Dilandau. When he accidentally murdered her, Van swore vengeance against Dilandau, despite Escalina's insistence that Van let go of his hate.
Scherazade
A legendary Knight Machine piloted by Allen Schezar VIII.
Escaflowne
A powerful Knight Machine piloted by Van and powered by Hitomi, Escaflowne is both the protector and deity of the people of Fanelia.

VISION 32:
INVADING THE ARK




...BECAUSE THEY KNEW THIS DAY WOULD COME.
I'M STARTING TO THINK THE ANCESTORS OF FANELIA BUILT ESCAFLOWNE...
THIS IS NUTS.

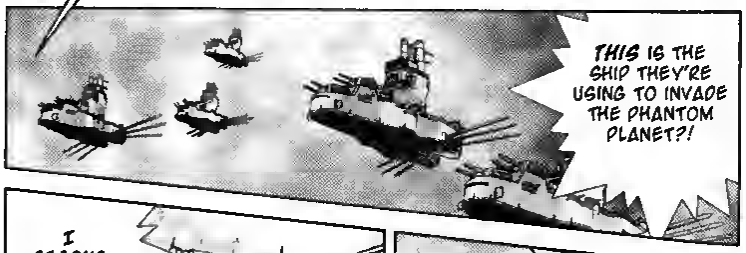



THERE SHE IS
VAN, UP AHEAD!

ARK FROM HELL, INCOMING.

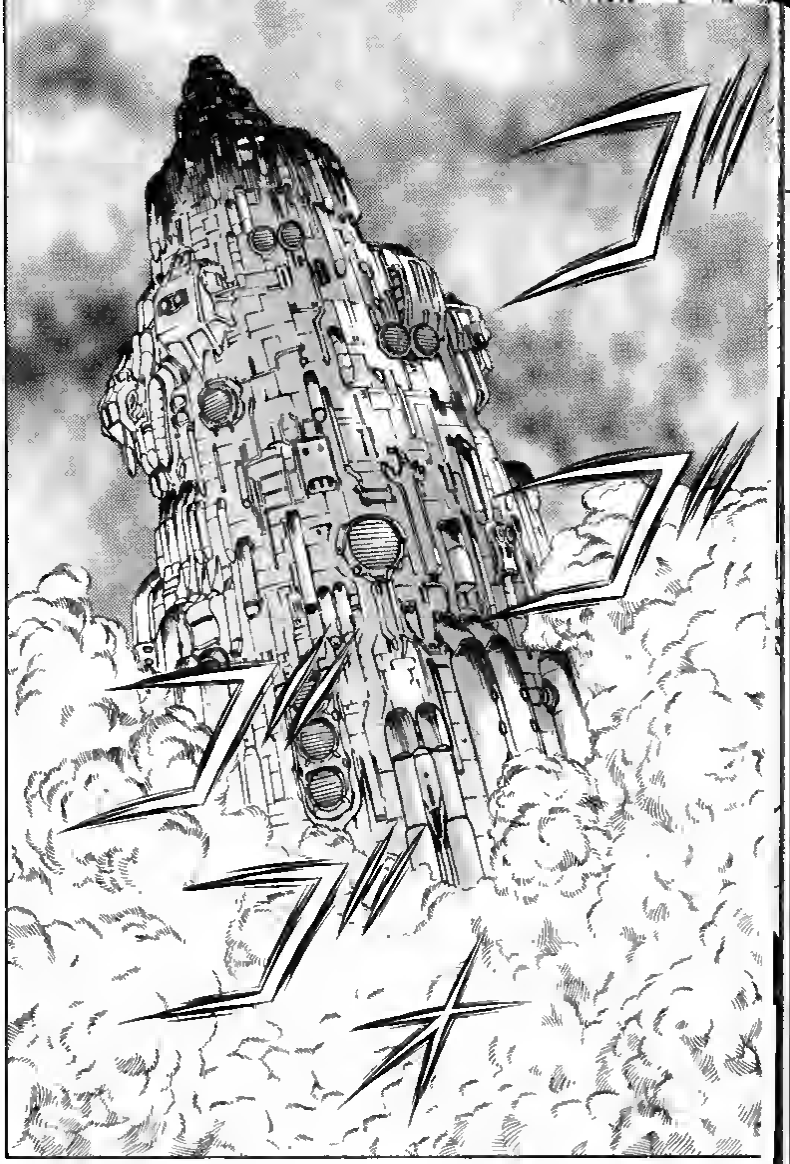
THANK ESCAFLOWNE. THAT JEWEL IS ABSORBING THE SPACE-TIME STORMS AS WE GO.

I CAN'T BELIEVE WE CAN FLY HERE.

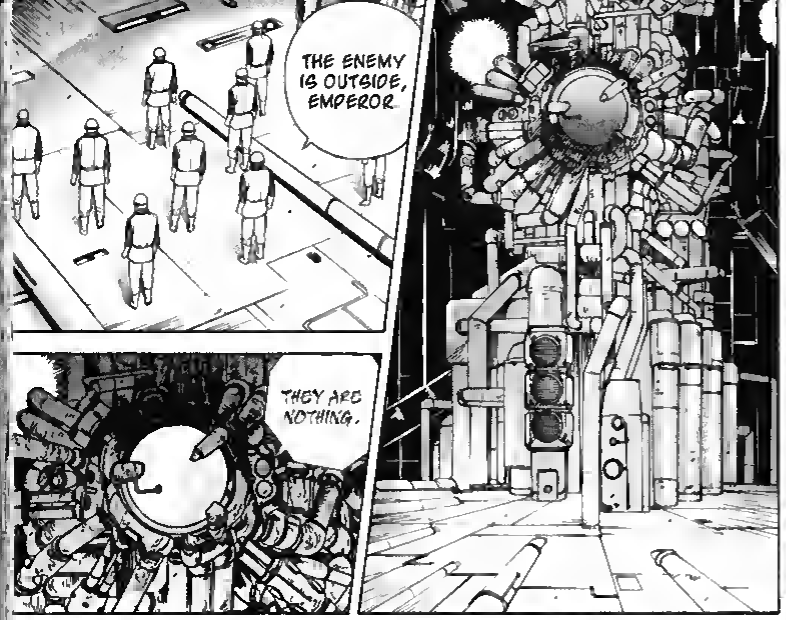

THIS IS THE SHIP THEY'RE USING TO INVADE THE PHANTOM PLANET?!

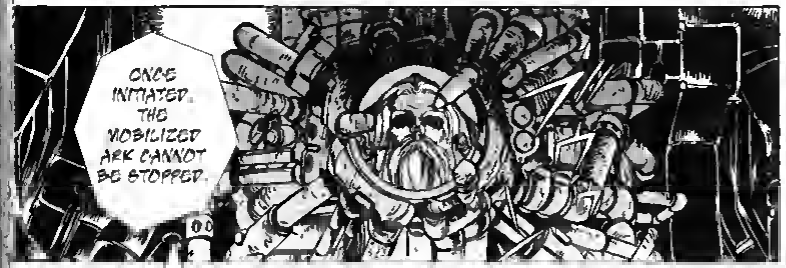
I SECOND THAT VOTE!

I VOTE WE BREAK IN.



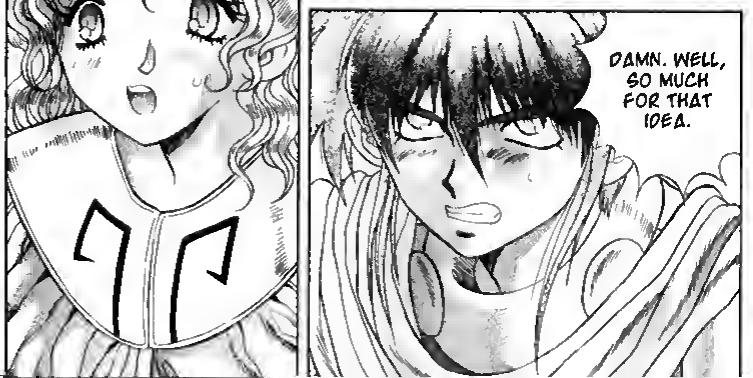
WE'RE GONNA SURF THIS ENERGIGT WAVE TO VICTORY!
YOU GUYS MAY WANT TO STAND BACK.
MOVE BACK!
I LIKE THE DRAGON BETTER.


THE ENEMY IS OUTSIDE, EMPEROR.
THEY ARE NOTHING.


ONCE INITIATED, THE MOBILIZED ARK CANNOT BE STOPPED.

THOSE FOOLS ARE WELCOME TO END THEIR LIVES TRYING!

THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME LEFT BEFORE THEY LEAVE FOR EARTH!

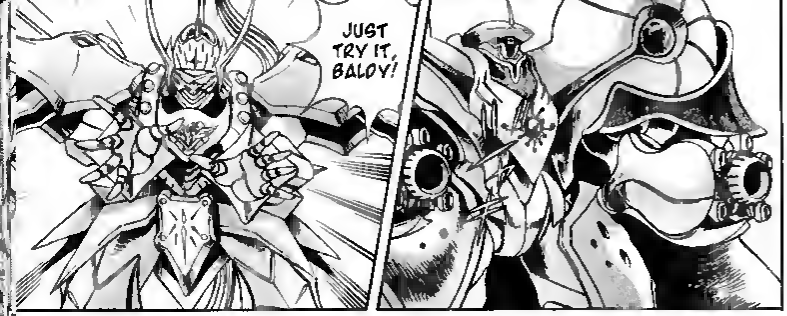

DAMN. WELL, SO MUCH FOR THAT IDEA.

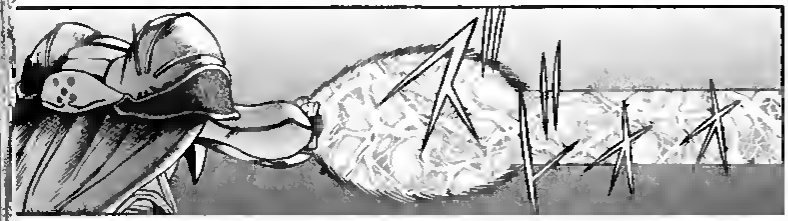
I AM THE PERFECT HUMAN ENERGIST!
I WILL NOT DIE!
SHE WILL DIE!
I WILL KILL HER
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU? EVER SINCE YOU CAME BACK FROM FREIO
AND DON'T TOUCH ME!
I HAVE TO KILL THAT WITCH, ROVU!
...
WHAT WAS THAT?
Hah...
Ngh...
I MUST K-KILL HER
IT'S...THE G-GIRL.
wff
THAT CORRUPTED ENERGIST WHORE HAS POISONED ME!
DEATH HAS POISONED ME.
BROTHER, WHAT'S WRONG?

I KNOW YOU'RE HERE, YOU LYING LITTLE MINX.
COME OUT, COME OUT, WHEREVER YOU ARE.
Hoh
Hoh

FIRE AT WILL!
OPAL'S IN THERE.
DISGUSTING PEONS. OUT OF MY WAY!

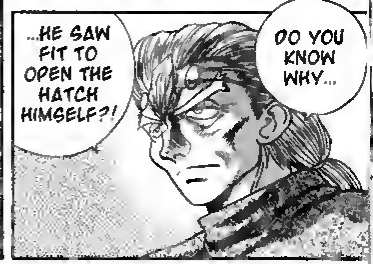
EVERYONE, STAY BACK!
WHAT'S THAT?
IT'S THAT DAMN GUYMELEF!


JUST TRY IT, BALOY!



OPAL'S OF NO MORE CONCERN TO US
EMPEROR DORNKIRK SAID TO LEAVE HIM BE.

WHAT THE DEVIL IS OPAL DOING?!


...HE SAW FIT TO OPEN THE HATCH HIMSELF?!
DO YOU KNOW WHY...

OPAL'S PROVEN HIMSELF UNWORTHY OF THE PHANTOM PLANET. WE SHOULD KEEP OUR CONQUEST FREE OF HIS TAINTED BREATH.
HE DESERVES NONE.

REALLY? I KNOW YOU AND OPAL SHARE GENES AND A CHILDHOOD IN THE LAB TOGETHER, ROVU.
YOUR SYMPATHY IS... TOUCHING.

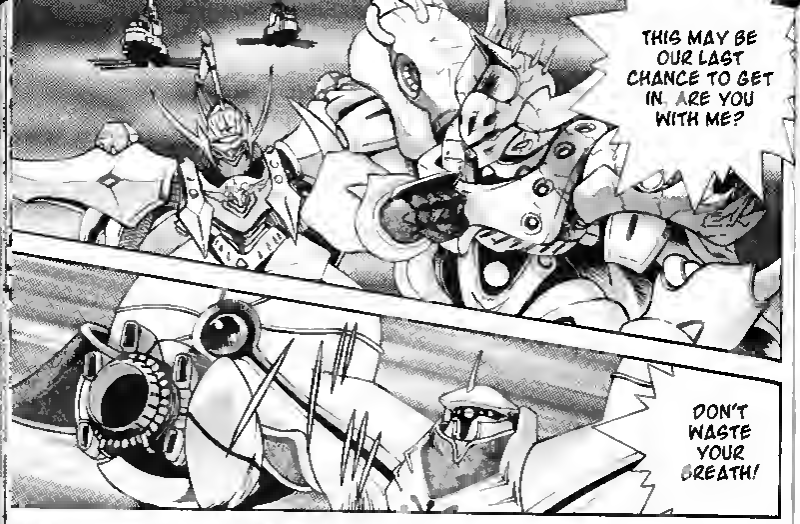
HEY!
STAND STILL, DAMN YOU!
I'M GETTING TIRED OF THIS!
RRR!
SHIT!
WELL, THAT DID A WHOLE LOTTA NOTHING.
TASTE THE WRATH OF A TRUE GOD!!!
FOOLS! YOU ACTUALLY BOW DOWN TO THAT TIN CAN?!

YOU AND THAT LITTLE TART WILL LEARN RESPECT!
NNGH!
IT NEVER TOOK!
!!
TRIED LEARNING IT BEFORE
WHEN I'M DONE, YOU WILL BOW DOWN ONLY TO ME!
!!
WHY CAN'T I HIT YOU?!
AAAGH!
crick
crack
I PROBABLY SHOULD'VE STARTED KICKING YOUR ASS BY NOW, BUT WATCHING YOU FLAIL AROUND LIKE THAT WAS JUST TOO DAMN FUNNY.
YOU MIGHT HAVE THE BIGGEST ROBOT ON THE BLOCK, BUT IT CAN'T MANEUVER FOR SHIT.

WHO DARES TO--
?!
NOT NEARLY LONG ENOUGH FOR ME!
BEEN A WHILE, ODAL.
COLT? SHILHA?!
IS THAT YOU?!
AAAAAGH!
ESCA, NO!
WHICH I WILL NOW CRUSH.
A UNCOUTH RESPONSE FROM A SIMPLE MIND
M-MAN, YOUR R-ROBOT REALLY REEKS.

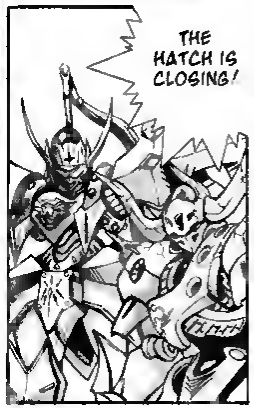
-THE EMPIRE PLANS ON ABANDONING THIS WORLD, LEAVING EVERYONE ELSE BEHIND TO DIE
I'VE ALREADY WITNESSED DORNKIRK'S GENOCIDE OF MY PEOPLE.
PRINCE VAN..
That is one nasty case of comic Dyad
LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT... YOU'RE MAKING FUN OF OUR FACES?!
!!
I'LL BE DAMNED IF I'M GOING TO LET THAT SON OF A BITCH KILL AN ENTIRE PLANET.
HEY! LOOK AT THE ARK!
SO THE PITIFUL RAYONS SHOW THEIR T-TRUE FACES.
WE SHOULD HAVE KILLED YOU ALL WHEN WE HAD THE CHANCE.
crick
HAAAGH!
shwip

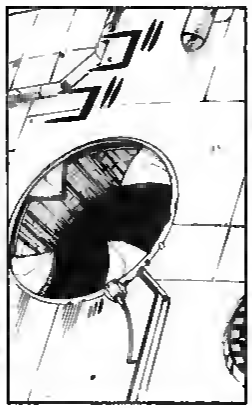
IS THAT A SHIP OR A METEOR?!
WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON?!
THE ARK'S A WORLD UNTO ITSELF.
NOT A METEOR, VAN.
BUT MAYBE..


THIS MAY BE OUR LAST CHANCE TO GET IN. ARE YOU WITH ME?
DON'T WASTE YOUR BREATH!

YOUR KIND WILL DIE WITH THIS PLANET!
crack

YOU MISSED.
shnk


THE HATCH IS CLOSING!



ZAIBACH WOULON'T DARE DESERT ME!
WHAT MOCKERY IS THIS?!

THIS IS IT, GUYS.

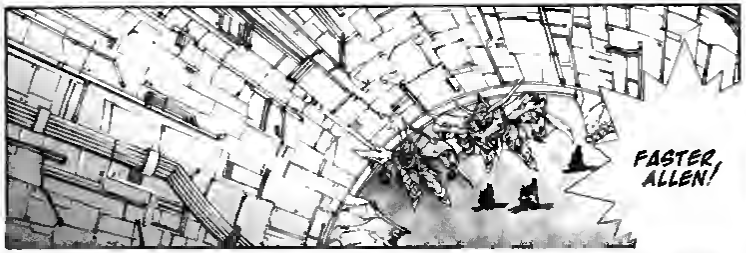
!

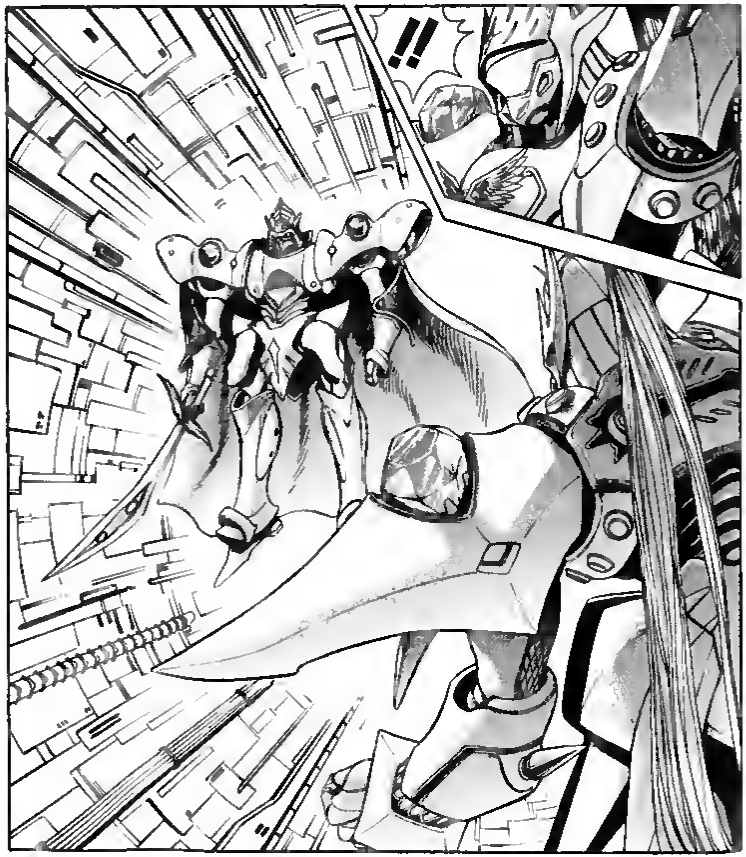
ENOUGH!
!!
ALLEN, YOU ARE ONE SCARY PIECE OF WORK.
WE'LL NEVER MAKE IT!
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO MY BODY?
HGCK! GH..HGG!
GAAGH!
NO MORE RUNNING, OPAL!

I CAN HEAR OPAL!
ESCAFLOWNE?
THE ANCIENT IN ME WANTS TO TALK.
UM.. OPAL, LISTEN
HUH?
SHE'S COME OUT OF THE ENERGIST TO SPEAK TO ME!
!
I-I NEED HELP.
メキ
ベキ
バキ
IT'S AS IF I'M BEING TORN APART!
OPAL?
IT NO LONGER OBEYS MY COMMANDS!
ベキ
ベキ
BETELGAS IS FAILING.
!!
BUT I AM PERFECT! NO HUMAN ENERGIST RIVALS MY INFALLIBILITY. THIS. THIS IS THAT GIRL'S FAULT!

AN ENERGIST IS EMPATHIC. IN OTHER WORDS, IT ABSORBS THE FEELINGS OF PEOPLE.
IN TURN, AN ENERGIST CAN TURN EMOTION INTO POWER.
BUT EVIL SENTIMENT... IT CORRUPTS THE ENERGIST'S ABILITY. NOT ONLY WILL THE POWER FAIL, IT WILL TWIST INTO ITS OWN DESTRUCTION
WHAT?!
CONNECTING WITH ME EXPOSED YOUR EVIL NATURE. IF YOU'VE MISUSED THE ENERGIST...
...I'M AFRAID YOU'VE CAUSED YOUR OWN DEATH.
YOU'VE BROUGHT THIS ON YOURSELF, OPAL.
HGGCK..
MUGHCK!
I DON'T WANT TO DIE!
I DON'T WANT TO--
WHAT WILL H-HAPPEN TO MY SOUL.. WITHOUT A BODY TO RETURN TO?!
WHAT WILL BECOME OF MY SPIRIT?!
HAAAGCK!

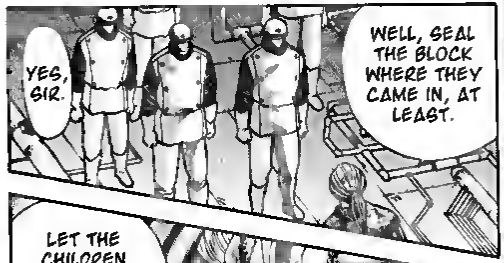
THE HATCH!
YES! ALLEN, LET'S GO!
WHAT'S GOING ON? WHY'D HE EXPLODE?!
DON'T KNOW. BUT UNLESS YOU WANT TO GET CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE, WE'D BETTER FLY.
YOUR OWN SENTIMENT CALLS FORTH YOUR FATE.


FASTER, ALLEN!


!!

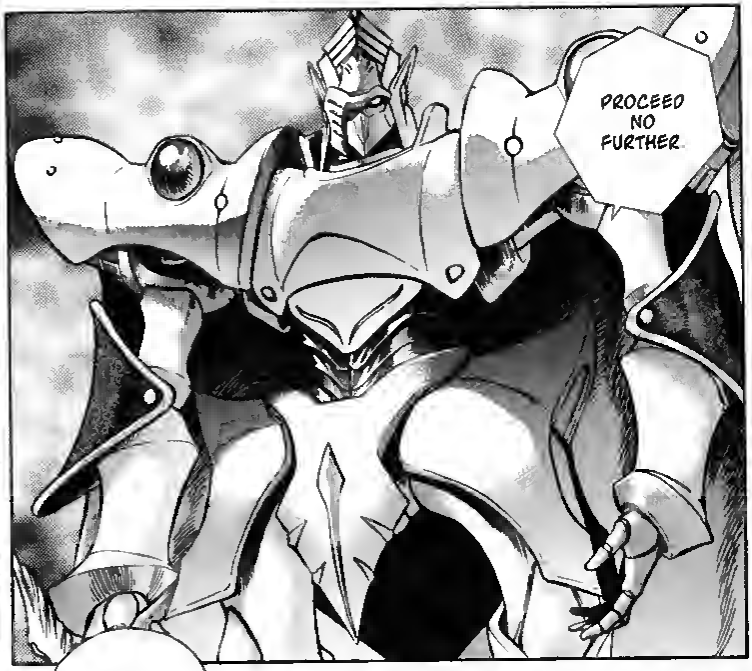
NOT BEFORE THE ARK HAS FULLY LEFT GAEA, SIR.
DO WE HAVE TIME TO REPAIR THE HATCH?

BLAST THAT OPAL.


YES, SIR.
WELL, SEAL THE BLOCK WHERE THEY CAME IN, AT LEAST.

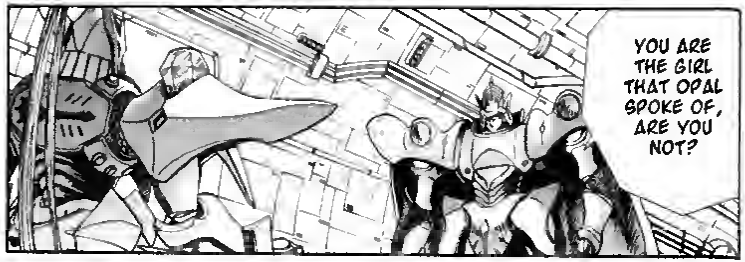
LET THE CHILDREN AND THEIR PRECIOUS ESCAFLOWNE COME.
IF THEY'RE HERE, THEY'RE HERE, I SUPPOSE.
THE STEEL DEMONS WILL BE WAITING TO END THIS GAME ONCE AND FOR ALL.

VISION 33:
EMERGENCE OF THE FIRST COMMANDER

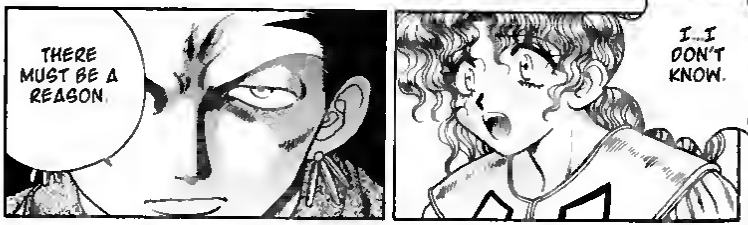

PROCEED NO FURTHER.

...THIRD COMMANDER. AND YOU ARE MINE.
I AM ROVU...

ROVU, HUH? WELL... WANNA BET?

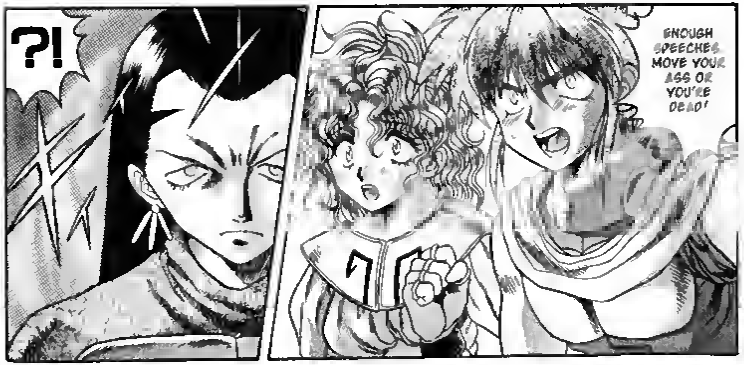

YOU ARE THE GIRL THAT OPAL SPOKE OF, ARE YOU NOT?

WHY DO YOU NOT SLUMBER?
I'VE HEARD THE ENERGISTS OF THE ANCIENTS ARE ASLEEP AT UBOO.


THERE MUST BE A REASON.
I...I DON'T KNOW.

DAMN, THEN THAT'S ANOTHER GUYMELEF!
VAN, SHE'S ANOTHER HUMAN ENERGIST!
WHAT?!

YOU CANNOT WIN.
THE REVOLUTIONIST'S ARMY WILL FAIL.


?!
ENOUGH SPEECHES. MOVE YOUR ASS OR YOU'RE DEAD!

fwee
fwee
INCAPABLE OF THINKING FOR THEMSELVES, THEY SERVE ME WELL.
THEY'RE ALL HUMAN ENERGISTS, ALBEIT IMPERFECT ONES.
KILL THEM!
fwoosh
shoom
SHE WILL PRESIDE OVER YOUR DEFEAT.
YES, SPILKÁ IS HER NAME.
THE STEEL DEMONS HAVE COME TO FINISH YOU.
AH, SHIT.

YOU WANT A PIECE OF THIS GIRL, BE MY GUEST
C'MON, ALLEN! WE'RE NOT ABOUT TO LET YOU HAVE ALL THE FUN!
NOT JUST A PIECE, I WANT HER IN MANY PIECES!
COLT! BEHIND YOU!
AGH!
I DON'T SUPPOSE THESE IDIOTS WILL BLOW THEMSELVES UP LIKE OPAL DID.
IT DOESN'T MATTER, 'CUZ I CAN DO A FINE JOB BLOWING THEM TO HELL ON MY OWN!
SHILHA, COLT, THERE'S NO TURNING BACK FROM HERE.

YOUR DEATH IS LONG OVERDUE!
CRAP, SHE'S FAST!
OW!
I DON'T THINK I..
SHIT! MY MOBILE UNIT'S DEAD.
?!
I'LL HANDLE ESCAFLOWNE.

HOW NOBLE.
WHAT?!
NOTHING WILL KEEP ME FROM THE GATES OF UTOPIA!
THE VOYAGE TO THE PHANTOM PLANET WILL PROCEED AS PLANNED.
VAN, BE CAREFUL!!
DAMMIT!

SHE'S TOO FRIGGIN' QUICK. I CAN'T GET THE WAVE READY!
THAT'S IT, BITCH. TIME FOR YOU TO DIE!
WHA?!
FEH.
SHIT!
YOU'VE HAD A GOOD RUN, ESCAFLOWNE, BUT YOUR DEATH WAS INEVITABLE.
NO! ALLEN!
ALL UNITS GET MOVING.
FIRE AT WILL YOU'RE BACKING UP SCHERAZADE!

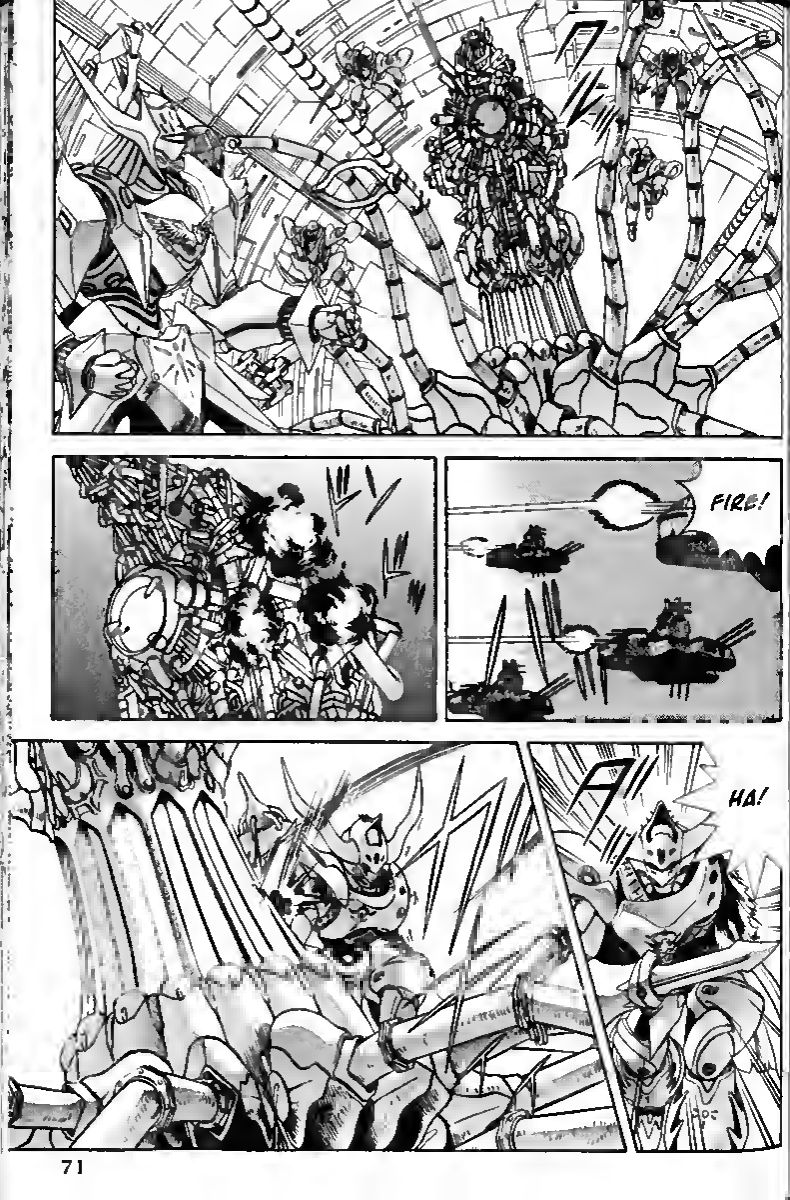
MAN, THAT WAS CLOSE.
?!
COME NO FURTHER.
THAT HIT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN... THIS IS LUDICROUS!
WH-WHY CAN'T I MOVE?
THAT DOESN'T SOUND GOOD.

ARE ALL HUMAN ENERGISTS
!!
.. THIS DAMN CLINGY?!

YOU'RE FINISHED, ROVI. YOU HAVE FAILED.
I'VE YET TO EVEN SEE YOUR FACE!
FIRST COMMANDER! YOU CAN'T...
THAT'S ANOTHER HUMAN ENERGIST!
...ESCAPE!
HMM. WELCOME TO THE ARK...
THAT'S DORNKIRK!

AAAGH!
NO! DORNKIRK, WAIT!
PLEASE! I MUST GO WITH YOU!
ALL THOSE YEARS SPENT IN THE BIO LAB..
EMPEROR DORNKIRK!
PLEASE DON'T LEAVE FOR PARADISE WITHOUT ME!
I-I KNOW YOU'RE JUST A HOLOGRAM.
MY ENERGIST BODY IS AS REAL AS YOURS.
FAR FROM IT.
IT'S YOU!
HELLO AGAIN, DAUGHTER OF THE ENERGIST.
AND NOW, MY DEAR... WE MUST SAY OUR FAREWELLS.
HEH HEH.
HE WILL HELP ME ACCOMPLISH WHAT I WANT.
THIS MAN WORKS AS MY OTHER SELF.

HACGK!
WE EVEN SHARE.. FATES.
OPAL AND I ARE THE S-SAME, AFTER ALL.
HGG... NN...
BOOM!!!


FIRE!
HA!

GOODBYE, ESCAFLOWNE.
SHIT! SHIT! SHIT! SHIT!
AAAGH!

GAGH!
WATCH IT, ALLEN! ENERGIST WAVE!

ESCAFLOWNE!
NOW YOU HAVE NO ENERGIST WAVE.
HE--HE--HE. TORE OFF OUR FUCKING ARMS!

?!
COME TO ME...
...DAUGHTER OF THE ENERGIST.
TOGETHER WE WILL LEAD THE ARK TO EDEN.
HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
IT IS THROUGH THEIR WILL THAT THE ARK DERIVES ITS POWER.
ONLY A PERFECT HUMAN ENERGIST CAN MOVE THE ARK.
STUDIO
HITOMI, GET DOWN!
VAN!

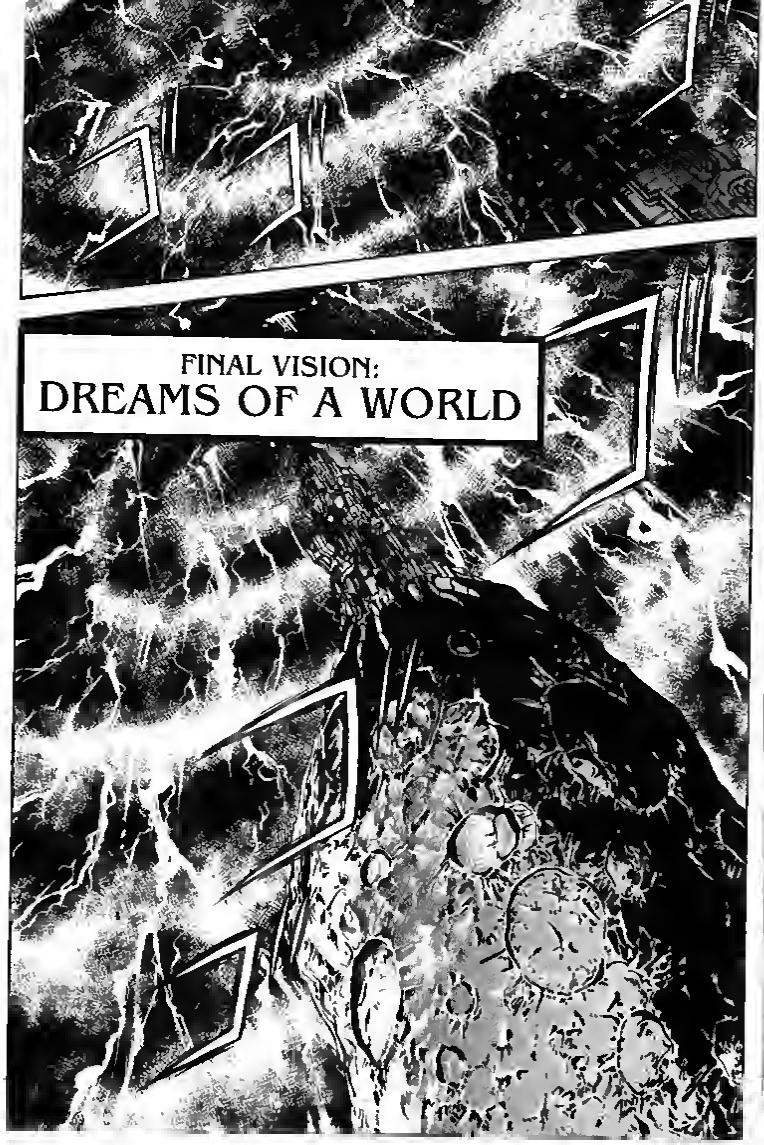
NOW COME WITH ME, LADY.
OF COURSE. THEY WERE REFINED FOR THIS PURPOSE.
YOU MEAN... THERE ARE EVEN MORE HUMAN ENERGISTS?
TOUCH HER AND YOU'RE MEAT!
OH, GOD! VAN!
VAAAAAN!

B-BUT YOU WANTED TO DESTROY ME!
?!
JOIN ME AND WE WILL RULE PARADISE TOGETHER.
YAAAAH!
YES... YES, AND I STILL DO!
KIIIIII!
YOU CAN RETURN WITH ME.
NOW, CHILD, YOU'RE A HUMAN FROM EARTH, CORRECT?
NEO-GAEA?!
G-GO HOME? BUT I WON'T LEAVE GAEA TO DIE!
I WILL TRAVEL TO EARTH AND CREATE A NEW GAEA.
GAEA IS A FAILURE.
NEO-GAEA WILL NOT FAIL.

NO, PLEASE, NOOO!
WHAT'S HE DOING TO HER?
HITOMI!
AAAAH!
IF YOU WON'T JOIN ME...
IT HOLDS THE POWER OF THE ANCIENTS!
BUT YOUR ENERGIST BODY...THAT I WANT TO PRESERVE.
HUH?
...THEN YOU WILL BECOME ME!
NO!

A PERFECT MERGE
EXCELLENT! HA HA HA!
YES. THE ENERGY SPILLS FROM MY LIMBS
H-HE DIDN'T JUST... HITOMI!
VAN, PLEASE! H-HELP ME!
YAAAAAH!!
HITOMI?!
stagger

A SPACE-TIME STORM IS GATHERING, SIR
GOOD! WE'LL FLY DIRECTLY INTO ITS CORE.
IT IS A GATEWAY LEADING US THROUGH THE FABRIC OF SPACE AND TIME...
THE ARK HAS CREATED THAT STORM.
...TO OUR NEW HOME.
NOW, MY MAGNIFICENT ARK, TAKE US TO EARTH! TAKE US TO PARADISE!!

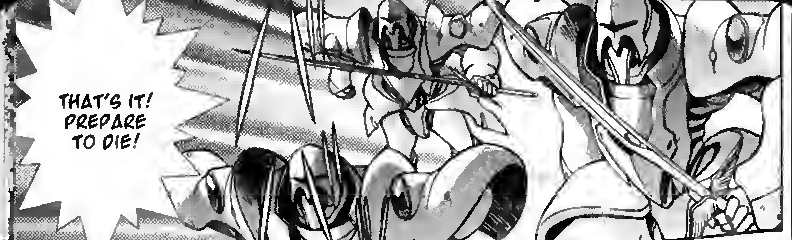

FINAL VISION:
DREAMS OF A WORLD

NO, GODDAMMIT! COME BACK!
YOU ASSHOLES...
HITOOOM!!!

I CAN'T JUST LEAVE HER!
Hah...
Hff...
NNGH...
I CAN'T... UGH...
HITOMI!
IT'S OVER.
ESCA?
Hff...
Huh...
ESCAFLOWNE WON'T MOVE WITHOUT HER.
Nn...
Ngh
DAMN
slide
...IS DEAD!
THE GIRL HAS BECOME A PART OF MY BODY. HITOMI, AS YOU KNOW HER...
YOU'RE FULL OF SHIT, OLD MAN!

I HAVE TO MAKE THIS COUNT.
I'M LEAKING FUEL
!!
SHE'S MOVING!
VAN, NOOOO!
ANOTHER GUYMELEF?!
!!
WELL, WELL.
...IT'S NOT EVERY DAY THAT A GOD BOWS DOWN TO YOU.
I KNOW YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING LEFT IN YOU!
COME ON, SCHERAZADE. MOVE!
VAN!
GRGH!

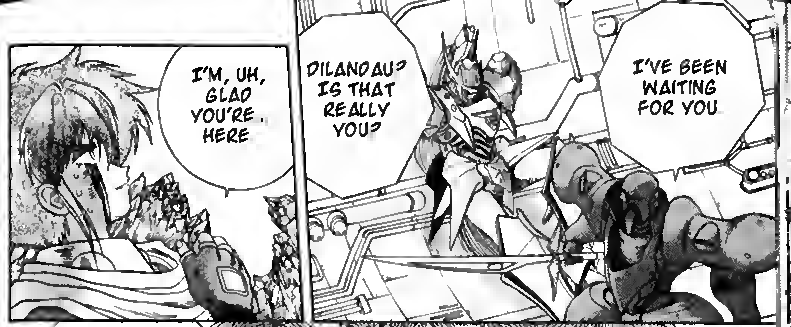
OF COURSE YOU DO, LITTLE PRINCE. IT'S THE VOICE THAT HAUNTS YOUR DREAMS AT NIGHT
ARE YOU NUTS?! YOU'RE HIS COMRADE!
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT, BUT I HAVE NO COMRADES
I RECOGNIZE THAT VOICE!
SHIT!
AAAAGH!


THAT'S IT! PREPARE TO DIE!

HERE THEY COME!

FIRE AT WILL!

...AND YOU STILL HAVE NO IDEA THAT IT'S ME YOU SHOULD BE FIGHTING.
I'M RIGHT BEFORE YOUR VERY EYES...
DENSE AS EVER, VAN.
HMM...


I'M, UH, GLAD YOU'RE HERE.
DILANDAU? IS THAT REALLY YOU?
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.

IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE TAKEN A FEW HITS. EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?
HOW VERY SWEET.

WHAT?!
I'M AFRAID HE DIDN'T MAKE IT.

WHERE'S CHIEF LUGAU?

ALLOW ME TO JOIN THIS FIGHT.

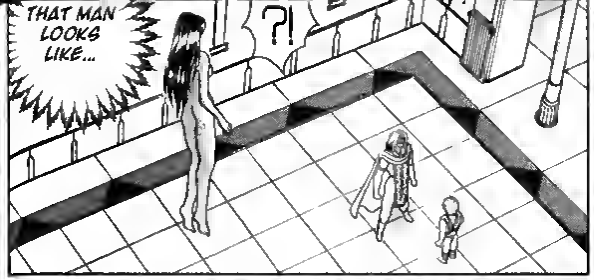
HUGGH!
WAS MY MERGE IMPERF-- UGH!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, LORD?
NO.
!!
OH... EMPEROR DORNKIRK!
ALL THIS TIME, AND IT WAS YOU WHO WAS OUR COMMANDER
YES, SIR!
POWER UP THE CENTRAL ENERGIST TO MAXIMUM STRENGTH.
SEND THE ARK THROUGH THE STORMS AND TO EARTH AT ONCE!

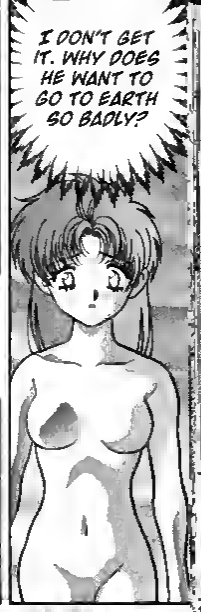
I THINK I'M INSIDE... DORNKIRK.
THAT'S THE ARK!
EMPEROR!
HGGH!!
IMPOSSIBLE. THIS CANNOT BE HAPPENING!
THE CHILD IS A DEMON!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. I ABSORBED THE GIRL COMPLETELY!
GAAAAGH!

IT CAN'T BE DONE!
ONE DAY I WILL RETURN TO EARTH!
I'M DOING THIS WITH OR WITHOUT YOUR COOPERATION.
OPEN THE DOOR!
WHEN THAT DAY COMES, I'LL USE THEIR POWER TO REAWAKEN THE ARK.
NO.. SOMEDAY THE PEOPLE OF GAEA WILL HARNESS SCIENCE AND FIND THIS SHIP.
WAIT, DORNKIRK!
WAIT!
HA HA HA HA!
WHAT?!
STOP THIS RIGHT NOW!
THERE ARE 300 CHILDREN TRAPPED INSIDE THERE!
DORNKIRK! OPEN THE DOOR!
MORE THAN ENOUGH TO SUSTAIN ME FOR A MILLENNIUM OR TWO.
300 ENERGIST BODIES.
HEH HEH HEH..
YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND!
IT'S THE THOUGHT OF LIVING ON THIS FAILED PIECE OF ROCK THAT'S MADNESS!
WATCH YOUR MOUTH, FANELIA!

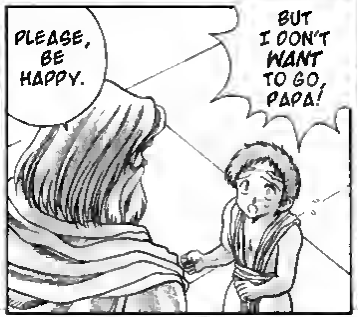
BUT...

I NEVER WANTED TO GO TO GAEA.


THAT MAN LOOKS LIKE...
?!


I DON'T GET IT. WHY DOES HE WANT TO GO TO EARTH SO BADLY?

YOU'RE A CHOSEN ONE

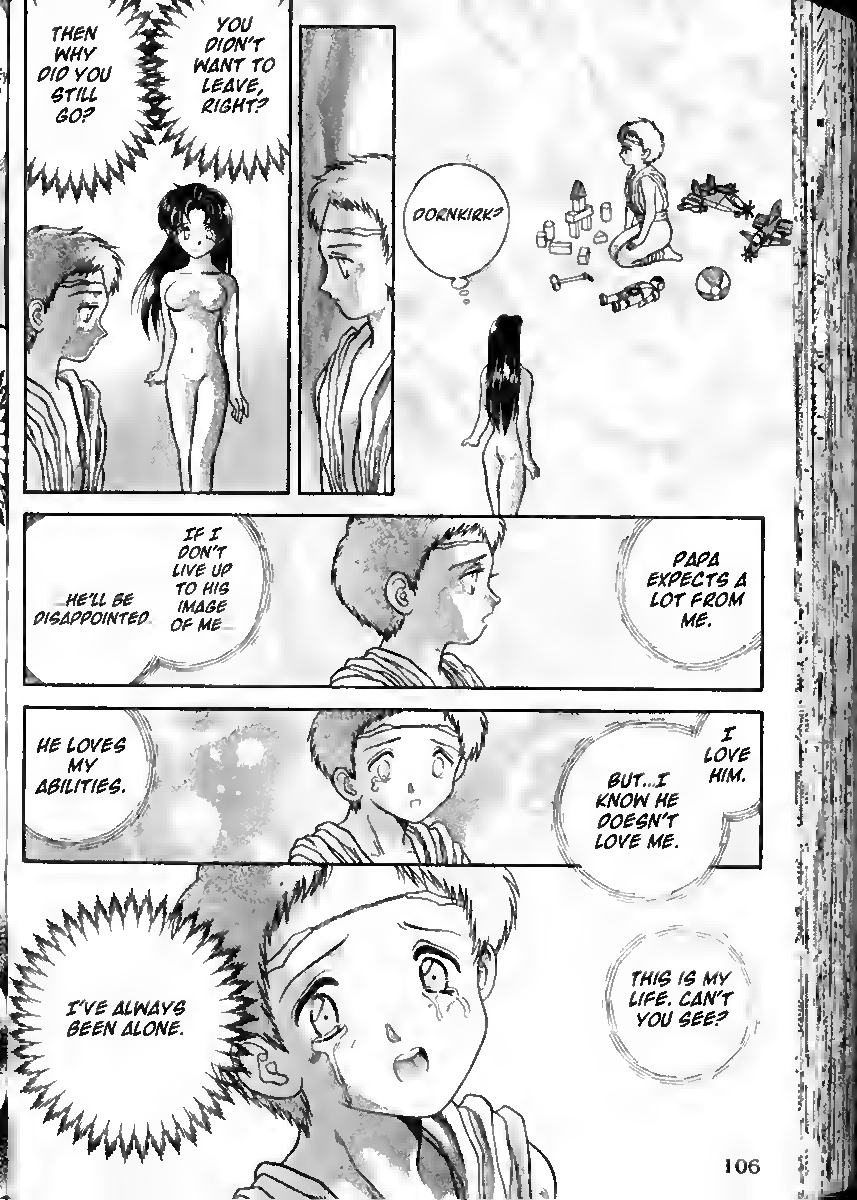

PLEASE, BE HAPPY.
BUT I DON'T WANT TO GO, PAPA!

...WAS ALL I REALLY WANTED.
I LOVED THE EARTH, AND I LOVED MY FATHER. STAYING WITH THEM...

OH MY GOD! THIS IS DORNKIRK'S SENTIMENT VISION!

I'M PROUD OF YOU, MY SON.
THE OTHERS MAY BE OLDER THAN YOU, BUT NONE ARE BETTER AT MERGING WITH ENERGIST.

I DON'T WANT MONEY OR POWER
THEY MEAN NOTHING TO ME.
ALL I WANT...
..ALL I'VE EVER WANTED..
..IS FOR MY PAPA..
...TO KISS ME GOODNIGHT!
THIS ISN'T HAPPENING.
THIS WHOLE TIME, HOW COULD WE HAVE KNOWN?
WE'VE BEEN FIGHTING A BOY.
EMPEROR DORNKIRK IS A POOR, LONELY BOY.


YOU DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE, RIGHT?
THEN WHY DID YOU STILL GO?
DORNKIRK?
PAPA EXPECTS A LOT FROM ME.
IF I DON'T LIVE UP TO HIS IMAGE OF ME
...HE'LL BE DISAPPOINTED.
I LOVE HIM.
BUT...I KNOW HE DOESN'T LOVE ME.
HE LOVES MY ABILITIES.
THIS IS MY LIFE. CAN'T YOU SEE?
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ALONE.

I'M STARTING TO THINK THE PEOPLE OF GAEA ARE NOTHING MORE THAN LOST CHILDREN.
WHAT AM I EVEN HERE FOR?
I'VE BEEN PULLED SO FAR FROM HOME TO HELP SAVE THESE PEOPLE, YET I'M POWERLESS.
THEY'RE ALL IN PAIN AND I CAN'T DO A THING ABOUT IT!
WHY? WHY DOES EVERYONE HAVE TO SUFFER?
DORNKIRK, VAN, ALL THE PEOPLE OF THIS PLANET...
DON'T CRY, DORNKIRK.

...IT'S INSIDE YOU, YOU KNOW.
THE POWER OF THIS PLANET..
YOU MADE A MISTAKE WHEN YOU CHOSE ME!
YOU'RE WRONG! I'M JUST A GIRL!
SOMETHING'S HAPPENING INSIDE OF ME!
HGH! WHAT'S THIS FEELING?
ESCAFLOWNE NEEDS ME?
YOUR EMOTIONS WILL MAKE IT SOAR.
RELINQUISH YOUR SOUL TO ESCAFLOWNE.
WHAT?
YOU'RE... THE ANCIENT, RIGHT?
I THINK IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO GO.
THE GOD ESCAFLOWNE WAS NEVER CREATED AS A TOOL FOR WAR.
IT WAS DESIGNED TO HEAL THIS PLANET
IT CAN STILL FULFILL ITS DUTY IF YOU LET YOURSELF GO.
THE SACRED PLANET OF GAEA NEEDS YOU, CHILD.
YOU'RE SO MUCH MORE THAN YOU REALIZE
?!

LORD DORNKIRK!
DID YOU SEE THAT?
NOW, DESTROY THE REBEL ARMY.
YES, SIR!
THE ENERGIST BODY REMAINS, AND THAT'S ALL THAT REALLY MATTERS
I'M...FINE I SIMPLY EJECTED A FOREIGN SENTIMENT.
I MUST RETURN TO THE CONTROL ROOM.

BELIEVE IN THE STRENGTH YOU HAVE INSIDE.
WHAT THE--
THIS IS THE TIME FOR YOU TO FLY!

?!
OH!
THE ENERGY PANEL'S GLOWING.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, VAN. I'M GOING TO JOIN WITH ESCAFLOWNE AND MAKE EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT.
DEAR GOD...
WE'LL NEVER GET THROUGH AT THIS RATE.
H-HITOMI!
HUH?
VAN... CAN YOU HEAR ME?

ESCAFLOWNE JUST STOOD UP BY HERSELF!
WILL SOMEONE KILL THAT JUNK HEAP ALREADY?!
SHE'S MINE!
SHE CAN'T HAVE MUCH POWER LEFT!
LET'S PUT HER OUT OF HER MISERY!
VAN!
I'D STAY DOWN IF I WERE YOU!
I WON'T LET ESCA FIGHT ANYMORE.
WELL, YOU'RE NOT ME. AND THAT'S THE BEST NEWS I'VE HAD ALL WEEK.
WHAT?!
Hff
Hah

WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?!
ENOUGH! PREPARE FOR DEATH!
?!

CAN'T SLEEP, HITOMI?
IT WAS JUST A NIGHTMARE, SWEETIE
MOMMY'S HERE WITH YOU.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT A THING.
HOW ABOUT I SING YOU A LULLABY?
IT'S THE DAUGHTER OF THE ENERGIST!
THAT GIRL LOOKS VAGUELY FAMILIAR.

WHAT KIND OF LIGHT IS...?
BUT WHOSE? AND WHY NOW?
A VISION? I'M RECEIVING A VISION?
WHAT?
!!
Waah!
Waaa!

HER VISION DOESN'T..
SOMETHING DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT.
IT'S BEEN SO LONG. SO VERY LONG...
I FORGOT ALL THIS I FORGOT WHAT IT'S LIKE TO FEEL.
I DON'T EVEN REMEMBER WHY I'M FIGHTING.

IT'S ALL A DREAM
IT WASN'T REAL. NONE OF IT WAS REAL.
THERE'S NO REASON TO BE SCARED.
NOTHING OUT THERE CAN HURT YOU

THE REVOLUTIONIST'S ARMY HAS BROKEN THROUGH!
THEY'VE ALREADY BREACHED BLOCK 15, SIR!
WHAT THE DEVIL IS GOING ON?
WHAT ABOUT THE STEEL DEMONS?
YOU HAVEN'T KILLED THOSE IDIOTS YET?
AND THEY'RE HEADING RIGHT FOR US!
THEY'RE FOLLOWING ESCAFLOWNE IT'S ALMOST LIKE SHE'S LEADING THEM
WE DON'T KNOW, SIR THEY SEEM TO HAVE LOST THE WILL TO FIGHT
WHAT?!
..I HAVE TO SHOW MY SENTIMENT.
BUT THAT CAN ONLY DO SO MUCH, RIGHT?
I HAVE TO MOVE PAST THAT.
IF I WANT TO HELP THIS WORLD...
I THINK I'M STARTING TO GET IT. UP UNTIL NOW, I'VE ONLY EXPERIENCED THE SENTIMENTS OF OTHERS.

I AM.
SO YOU'RE BACK, HITOMI?
ARE YOU INSIDE ESCA?
HUH...
I THINK I CAN FEEL YOU Y'KNOW, FROM HERE.
IT'S KINDA WEIRD.
I DO KNOW, VAN.

I'M LOSING MY FRICKIN' MIND.
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
WE'RE HEADING FOR THE CONTROL ROOM.
HITOMI!
THAT'S WHERE WE'LL FIND DORNKIRK.
WHEN WE MERGED, I SAW HIS MEMORIES TRUST ME ON THIS.
THIS IS OUR CHANCE.
WE'RE GROUNDING THIS ROCK!

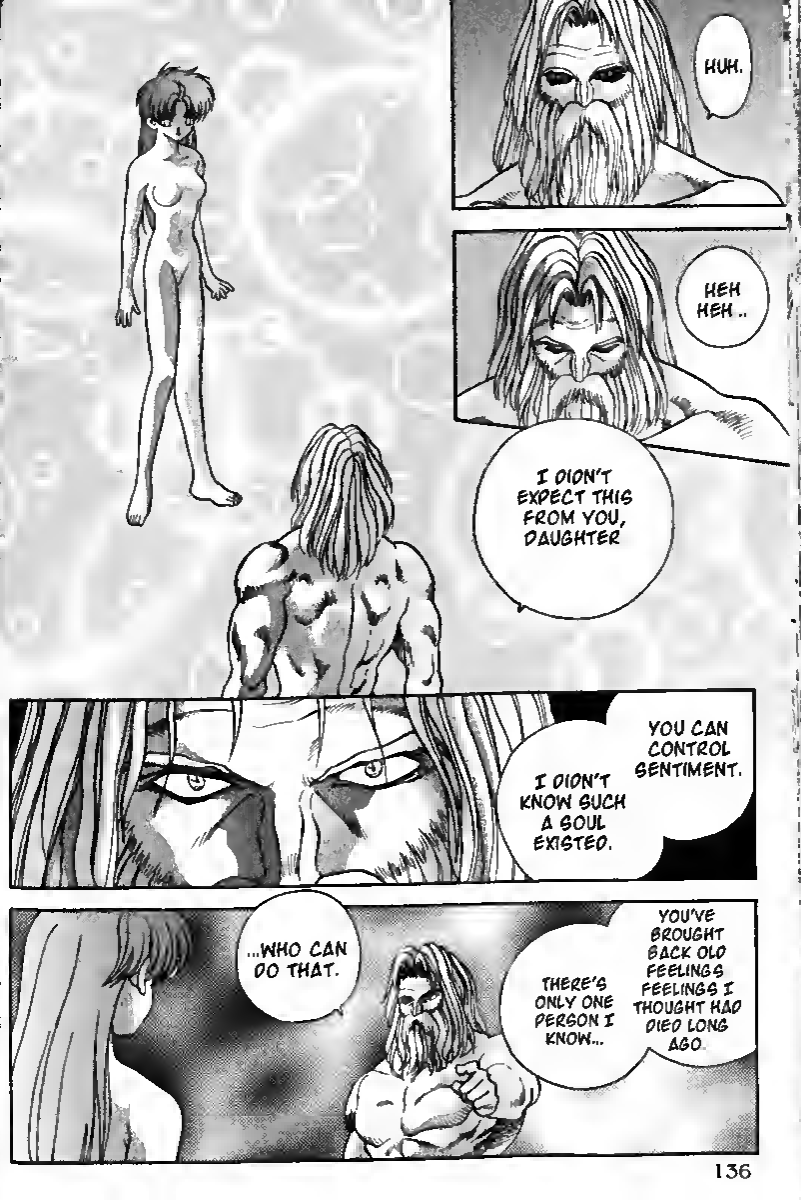
IT'S THE STORM.
THE ARK'S ENTERING THE STORM!
WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
HUH?
?!
WE'RE PASSING THROUGH TIME AND SPACE!

GAEA WILL BE DESTROYED!
WE CAN'T LET THIS SHIP REACH EARTH!
?!
DON'T DO THIS, OORNKIRK!
I'VE TOLERATED ENOUGH INTERFERENCE FROM YOU!
YOU MUST STOP THE ARK!

YOU'RE HAUNTED BY MEMORIES OF YOUR YOUTH.
YOU CAN DESTROY BOTH GAEA AND EARTH AND IT STILL WON'T EASE YOUR PAIN!
NOW, LEAVE MY CONTROL ROOM!
FOOLISH CHILD. I DON'T RUN FROM PAIN, I EMBRACE IT!
HE'LL ABSORB YOU AGAIN!
HITOMI, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
I SAID STOP!
AARGH!
WHAT?
DON'T DO IT!
HITOMI?
PLEASE, LISTEN TO ME!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO FIGHT ANYMORE, DORNKIRK!

AND MY EARTH. THIS IS MY PRECIOUS EARTH!
THIS.. THIS IS MY SENTIMENT.
I CAN SEE MY OWN VISION?
HUH? WHAT'S THIS...?
I LOVE YOU MORE THAN ANYTHING..
. DORNKIRK
YOU'VE BROUGHT AN OLD MAN SUCH JOY.
I'M PROUD OF YOU, MY SON

GOOD LORD!
FINALLY, WITCH. I KNOW WHO YOU ARE!
HEH HEH HEH.. THAT'S IT, THEN.
I WON'T REGRET LETTING IT GO.
THIS ISN'T MY TRUE BODY.
IT WILL BE WORTH IT TO FINALLY SEE YOU IN HELL!


HUH.
HEH HEH ..
I DION'T EXPECT THIS FROM YOU, DAUGHTER
I DION'T KNOW SUCH A SOUL EXISTED.
YOU CAN CONTROL SENTIMENT.
...WHO CAN DO THAT.
THERE'S ONLY ONE PERSON I KNOW...
YOU'VE BROUGHT BACK OLD FEELINGS I THOUGHT HAD DIED LONG AGO.

VAN, HIS ASTRAL BODY HAS PROBABLY WITHDRAWN DEEPER INTO THE ARK.
I'M OKAY. I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT DORNKIRK, THOUGH.
HITOMI!
OH GOD, NOT AGAIN! HITOMI!
ムリ
ムリ
LOOK AT THE DOOR.
!
THE ARK CANNOT FUNCTION WITHOUT THAT ROOM.
IF WE CAN DESTROY IT, THE SHIP WILL STOP.
THAT'S THE ENTRANCE TO THE CONTROL ROOM.
SHE'S OKAY! BUT WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
YOU ALL RIGHT?
ハキ
ハキ
ハキ

Kingdom of Asturia
Duchy of Freid
HE'LL MAKE IT, MY DEAR.
SIR ALLEN..
I'D..LIKE TO THINK SO.
THE STAKES FOR US HAVE NEVER BEEN HIGHER.
YOU HAD NO CHOICE, SHIAN. ALL WE CAN DO NOW IS WAIT..AND PRAY.
I SHOULD BE THERE
HOW DO YOU THINK THE FIGHT IS GOING? WITH VAN AND THE OTHERS, I MEAN.
PROVE TO ME YOU CAN DO THIS ON YOUR OWN, YOU BIG DOLT.
THAT DOESN'T MAKE ME FEEL BETTER. AFTER ALL, IT IS VAN WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.

I AM QUEEN.
RAPID STEEL!
WELL, WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?!
YAAAH!
SHILHA!
ALL RIGHT, SO WHICH OF US IS GOING TO TAKE OUT THE ROBOTIC SQUID?

KREEEEEE!
AIII!
QUIT WHINING! YOU STILL HAVE US TO PLAY WITH!
ARE YOU OKAY?
AAH!
MY GOD...
?!
I'LL LIVE.

SHILHA, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
hah
huff
?!
YOU THINK I'D DIE AND LET COLT SNAG YOU?
HITOMI, OUR KNIGHT MACHINES CAN'T GET PAST THAT THING.
BUT I THINK YOU CAN STILL SEAL DORNKIRK'S POWER
YOU DON'T NEED ESCAFLOWNE ANYMORE
UM... OKAY, I'LL TRY.
NOT WITHOUT ME.
SHE'S RIGHT. GO ON AHEAD. WE'LL HANDLE DORNKIRK'S PET.

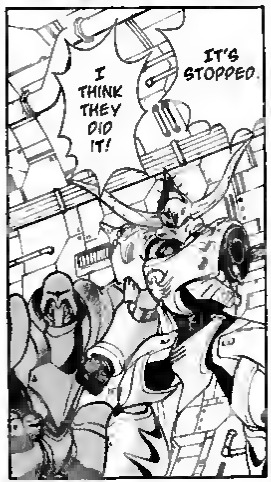
THIS WILL BE YOUR TOMB!
DIS-GUSTING FOOLS!
UGH! HE LOOKED BETTER AS A NAKED OLD MAN.
LOOKS LIKE WE'LL HAVE TO FIGHT HIM FROM HERE
AAAAAH!
VAN, LOOK BENEATH YOU!
THOSE ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE ANCIENTS!
THERE MUST BE HUNDREDS OF THEM!

STOP! DON'T TOUCH THAT!
AAAUURH!
YOU DON'T NEED TO HIDE ANY LONGER!
OPEN UP!
PLEASE, DON'T!
beep
beep
YOU KNOW NOTHING OF ME!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, WITCH?!
fzzz
HITOMI? HEY!
AAAUURH!
FEELING A BIT CONFIDENT, ARE WE?!
IT'S LIKE I THOUGHT THIS ISN'T REAL
NOT EXACTLY.
IT'S JUST ANOTHER ILLUSION OF YOURS, DORNKIRK
BUT I KNOW WHAT YOU REALLY ARE.

ALL I WANT IS FOR MY PAPA...
I DON'T WANT MONEY OR POWER.
RELEASE YOUR PAIN.
YOU'RE OKAY NOW, DORNKIRK. NO ONE IS GOING TO HURT YOU.
AND...
...GOOD NIGHT.
THEY MEAN NOTHING TO ME.
..TO KISS ME GOODNIGHT.
Mm
...
..LONG AFTER HIS BODY HAD WITHERED AWAY.
DORNKIRK'S SOUL CONTINUED LIVING WITHIN THIS CHAMBER...
WHAT THE HELL?

THIS WAY, DILANDAU NOW WE CAN HELP HITOMI.
WHAT?!
WHEN THE LEADERSHIP OF GAEA'S ON THE LINE, YOU REALLY SHOULD WATCH YOUR BACK
YOU'RE FAR TOO TRUST-WORTHY, ALLEN
WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

DORNKIRK'S SENTIMENT IS FADING
HE'S FADING
GOODBYE, DORNKIRK
I'M SO SORRY!


I THINK THEY DID IT!
IT'S STOPPED.

?!
GOOD JOB, LITTLE PRINCE.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE, DILANDAU?
SCHERAZADE'S NOT RESPONDING
WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? I'VE SEIZED THE ARK'S POWER
VAAAN!
WITHOUT DORNKIRK'S PESKY SPIRIT GETTING IN THE WAY, IT REALLY WASN'T ALL THAT DIFFICULT.
A STRONG LEADER!
THANK YOU FOR DEFEATING DORNKIRK!
ARE YOU CRAZY?
I TOLD YOU NOT TO TRUST ME YOU'RE A FOOL.
SPARE ME, PRINCE
WITH GAEA IN RUINS, THEY'LL BE LOOKING FOR A NEW LEADER!
HA HA HA HA!
WAIT, DILANDAU!
GOD-DAMMIT!

A TRANS-MISSION? IS IT FROM THE EMPEROR?
?!
MARSHAL GELGURAN!
!?
DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE YOUR OLD FRIEND? WAIT A MINUTE.. DIDN'T I KILL YOU?
IT-IT CAN'T BE!
I HAVE MERGED WITH IT.
THE ARK IS NOW MINE.

VAAAAAN!
DON'T, VAN! IF YOU GO THROUGH THERE, THERE'S NO COMING BACK!
I'M NOT ABOUT TO LET HIM SEIZE CONTROL OF GAEA!
HE'LL DESTROY THE WHOLE PLANET!
thud
OH, GOD! PLEASE, NO!
zzzap
NO!

GAAAAAH!
A DEFECTIVE BODY COULD NEVER MAKE YOU A MAN.
THE CIRCLE OF KARMA CONTINUES TO NIP AT YOUR HEELS, YOU BITTER OLD BASTARD
I-I SHOULDN'T BE ABLE TO FEEL...
NO! NOT AGAIN, YOU...DIRTY... AGH!
YAAAAAAAH!

YOU NEVER CHANGE.
YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND! YOU WOULDN'T DARE--
BUT I COULDN'T CARE LESS.
I DON'T CARE IF YOU HURT THE ARK!
BUT, SIR--
NGH! SHOOT HIM, Y-YOU IDIOTS!
clench
RRGH!

YOU'LL NEED MY HELP.
WE'VE GOTTA SMASH THIS THING TO STOP THE ARK.
WE MUST GET OUT OF HERE! THIS PLACE WILL DRIVE YOU MAD!
WHY TRY TO SAVE ME?
LITTLE PRINCE, THIS IS GETTING QUITE TIRING.
YOU AGAIN? WILL I EVER BE RID OF YOU?!
HUH?
YOU, ALLEN... YOU'RE ALL THE SAME. DELUSIONAL, MISERABLE DOLTS.
YOU DON'T REALLY THINK HE'S DOING THIS TO BE NOBLE, DO YOU?
THE ONLY REASON ALLEN FIGHTS IS TO EARN HIS FATHER'S RESPECT.
TAKE US BACK TO GAEA!
ARK, WE HAVE A CHANGE IN TRAVEL PLANS.
?!
HA HA HA HA!
HA HA HA HA! I CAN FEEL IT! THE POWER OF THE ARK IS TRULY MINE!
WHY WON'T IT STOP?
WHAT?
?!
WAIT, DILANDAU!

YOU KNOW NOTHING!
THAT'S NOT TRUE, DILANDAU!
I LOST MY MOTHER, ESCALINA AND YAIFA! I LOST EVERYTHING I COULD POSSIBLY LOVE...
I KNOW YOU LOVE GAEA. THAT'S WHAT KEEPS YOU ALIVE!
!!
ENOUGH!
...YET I STILL LIVE. SAVE YOUR TALK OF LOVE FOR THE POETS, VAN! GAEA HAS NO SAVIOR! IT HAS ONLY ME!
I'M PAST SAVING, YOU LITTLE SHIT. AND NOW, SO ARE YOU!
HEH HEH HEH!
HA HA HA!
GOD KNOWS WHY YOU KNOW, I ACTUALLY THOUGHT YOU'D BE HAPPY I KILLED HER
AND YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO COPE WITH THE LOSS OF YOUR MOTHER.
I'M DOING THIS BECAUSE I LOVE HITOMI, ALLEN AND GAEA.
I AM STILL MOURNING MY MOTHER, BUT SHE'S NOT WHY I'M DOING THIS.
PRETENTIOUS GARBAGE!
IT'S THE TRUTH. IT WILL BE LOVE THAT SAVES GAEA. NOT STRENGTH OR POWER, BUT LOVE
AFTER ALL, HOW COULD ANY PLACE THAT'S LOVED BE CONSIDERED A FAILURE?
HA HA! OH, THAT'S RICH...LOVE! DON'T MAKE ME SICK.

DRAW YOUR SWORD, VAN!
I'M AFRAID YOU'RE SORELY MISTAKEN.
YOU'RE ONLY HURTING OTHERS BECAUSE YOU'RE STILL IN PAIN.
IT ALL MAKES SENSE.
I FINALLY GET YOU, DILANDAU.
I W-WILL NOT. MY M-MOTHER ONCE SAID...HURTING OTHERS. ONLY PERPETUATES HURT.
BD.
IN PAIN?
I'M.. WHAT?
THE ONLY ONE IN PAIN HERE.
...IS YOU!
GIVE IT UP!
WHY ARE YOU STILL DOING THIS TO ME?!
GIVE IT UP!

MY BODY'S STARTING TO GO.
HEY, DILANDAU!
?!
..IS THIS MY BIG SUCCESS?
YOU MISERABLE I-I DON'T
?!
WHEN DID I...
..BECOME LIKE THIS?
IS THIS REALLY..
hee
hee
hee
hee
hee
hee
hee..hee.
WHAT? WHO'S THERE?!
WE'RE GOING TO SEE OUR HOMES AND FAMILIES AGAIN.
WE'RE GOING BACK.
YOU'RE TOO LATE, OLD MAN.
DO YOU CONTROL THE ARK?
ARE YOU THE CHILDREN OF THE ANCIENTS?
hee
hee
hee
hee
hee

...I THINK I S- YES. SEE.
DILANDAU!
HGGGGGCK!
THE ARK. IT'S A VESSEL FUELED BY EMOTION.
AND IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S HUNGRY FOR MY SENTIMENT, TOO.
IT PLANS TO ATONE FOR OUR PASTS
GET BACK! THE PORTAL'S UNSTABLE!
HITOMI! ARE YOU OKAY?
NO! I'M NOT LEAVING WITHOUT HIM!
VAN'S COMING BACK, I KNOW HE IS!
NO! VAN, PLEASE COME BACK!
VAN HAS TO DESTROY IT FROM THE INSIDE.
BUT IF HE DOES THAT, HE'LL BE...
ATTACKING IT IS NOT GONNA WORK.
THE CONTROL SYSTEM'S CREATING A BARRIER.

I USED THAT IDEAL TO DRIVE ME, FUEL MY HATRED.
YOU KNOW... I DIDN'T MEAN TO KILL HER. WHEN IT HAPPENED, I WANTED TO BELIEVE I DID IT IN ANGER.
THIS WAY, AT LEAST ONE OF US GETS TO LIVE.
WHAT? HOLD ON!
GOODBYE.
ME?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S STRONG, VAN.
BUT I'M JUST A BROKEN CHILD.
THIS IS WHERE I BELONG.
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR MY HOME FOR A VERY LONG TIME.
IT'S OKAY.. I'M HAPPY THIS WAY.
DILANDAU, NO! DON'T DO THIS!
WHAT DO YOU THINK, VAN? WILL MOTHER FORGIVE ME?
I CAN ATONE FOR EVERYTHING THIS WAY, RIGHT?

DILANDAU!
BEAUTIFUL, ISN'T IT?
IT'S ALL SO CLEAR.
NOW I KNOW WHAT I MUST DO.
HUH? IS THIS.. FANELIA?
IT NEVER SHOULD HAVE BEEN HER.
THIS TIME AROUND, I'M GOING TO LET MOTHER KILL ME. I WAS MEANT TO DIE THAT DAY, NOT HER.
NO, VAN, THIS IS NO JOKE. THE TRUTH IS THAT WE BOTH DIED THAT DAY
YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING!

PHYSICAL B-BODIES.. CAN'T SURVIVE HERE!
AAAAGH!
JUST RELAX AND COME HOME WITH US
YOU'RE ALREADY GOING TO DIE
GAEA'S YOUR REAL HOME!
GODDAMMIT! DON'T YOU GUYS GET IT? HOME'S NOT THE SAME ANYMORE! YOUR FAMILIES AND LIVES ARE GONE!
COME WITH US
WE'RE GOING HOME.
YOU AGAIN?
...when I pass, please purify my soul.
Quench the burning of desire
I plead, peaceful spring of Ubdo
WHAT THE ..?!
MOTHER, ARE YOU OUT THERE?!
WHERE IS SHE?!
THAT'S MOTHER'S SONG!
THIS IS ONLY IN MY HEAD. SH-SHE'S GONE.
NO. SHIT, NO!
DAMMIT, ARK! LEAVE MY MOTHER OUT OF THIS!

PLEASE DON'T LET IT DIE!
PLEASE, YOU HAVE TO LOVE THIS PLANET! YOU HAVE TO LOVE IT...BECAUSE IT LOVES YOU.
PLEASE, COME BACK TO ME!
VAN?
YOUR FATHER IS GAEA'S SKY.
YOUR MOTHER IS GAEA'S EARTH!
PLEASE, LISTEN TO ME! IT'S OKAY!
YOU'LL LIKE GAEA!
HE'S A LIAR!
THIS PLACE ISN'T HOME!

ウウウ…
!!
THE ARK.. THE CONTROL SYSTEM IS POWERING DOWN.
G-GOOD...
VAN, HANG IN THERE!
LISTEN TO ALLEN, VAN!
YOU'RE GONNA BE OKAY!
TH-THE KIDS.. F-FINALLY UNDERSTAND.
OH GOD, PLEASE DON'T DIE!
VAN?!
H..HITO...
VAN?! HOLD ON!
I..I-I HEARD YOU. THANKS FOR.GUIDING ME OUT.
AAAAGH!
DON'T DO THIS TO ME!
OH GOD, WHY?
YES, VAN, I'M RIGHT HERE!
I-I CAN'T SEE ANYTHING IT IS YOU, RIGHT?

I LOVE YOU MORE THAN ANYTHING!
VAN, YOU CAN'T LEAVE ME!

YOU'VE NEVER BEEN SCARED OF ANYTHING! YOU ALWAYS SAID YOU WERE TOO RECKLESS...
..BUT YOU GOT THROUGH EVERYTHING BECAUSE YOU NEVER GAVE UP!

COME BACK TO ME!
VAN, YOU CAN'T GIVE UP NOW!

NO..
OH GOD, NO...
drip
VAN?
Y-YOU'RE GETTING COLD..
NN...
NNN!

VAN..YOU CAN HAVE MY ENERGIST BODY, OKAY? JUST TAKE IT!
I..
I'LL NEVER FORGET YOU.
I'LL NEVER FORGET THIS PLACE!
BUT..
I DON'T CARE!
HITOMI, THAT MIGHT KILL YOU.

?!
YOU HAVE ONE FINAL TASK REMAINING, CHILD.
PLEASE, CAN YOU SAVE HIM?
YOU CAN TAKE MY BODY, IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES! JUST BRING VAN BACK!
HITOMI!
NOOOO!!

HITOMI!

BUT VAN'S ALWAYS BEEN WITH ME..HE'S PROTECTED ME, NO MATTER WHAT.
I DION'T... EXPECT THIS.
SINCE I ARRIVED, I'VE BEEN SCARED OUT OF MY MIND.
NOW IT'S MY TURN TO PROTECT HIM.
PLEASE DON'T FORGET THE SCARED LITTLE GIRL WHO CAME FROM FAR AWAY...
GOODBYE, ALLEN
HITOMI, WAIT!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS!
114

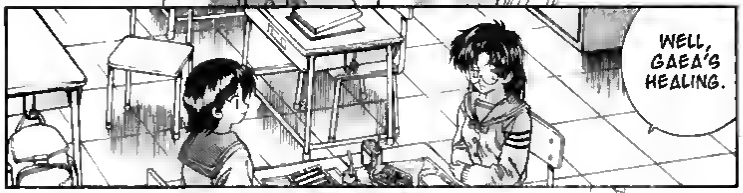
THAT FATEFUL DAY ALTERED THE COURSE OF THIS WORLD.
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
ESCAFLOWNE, I DON'T--
COME WITH ME.
ESCA-FLOWNE?
HIKOMI!!
IT'S TIME I TOLD YOU WHY YOU'RE REALLY HERE.
THE ARK, YOU SEE, WAS FIRST INTENDED AS A SATELLITE
FOR YEARS IT CIRCLED GAEA IN SILENCE, BUT SOMETHING WENT TERRIBLY WRONG. THE ARK FELL FROM ITS ORBIT, TURNING THIS LUSH PLANET INTO A WASTELAND
PLEASE DON'T EVER FORGET ME...

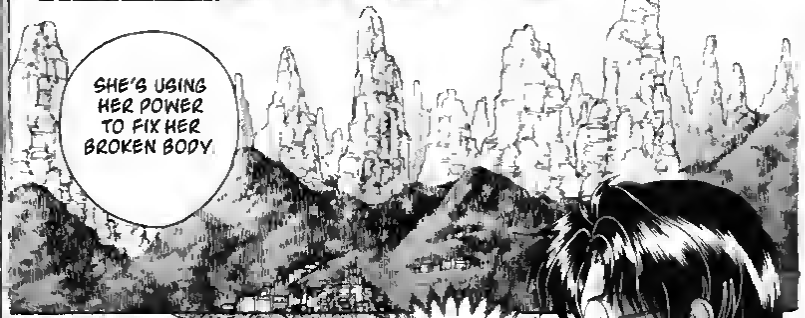
TH-THAT'S ME!!
THE ARK'S IMPACT PUT HER IN A STATE OF SHOCK. FOR MILLENNIA, SHE'S SLEPT.
NOT QUITE. SHE'S A CONSCIOUSNESS CREATED BY THE ANCIENTS AN ARTIFICIAL ASTRAL THAT MAINTAINS GAEA
THAT'S YOU, HITOMI.
YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON CAPABLE OF IT.
AND ALL THAT TIME, I'VE WAITED FOR THE ONE WHO CAN AWAKEN HER.

?!
BEHOLD THE ENERGIST CORE OF GAEA.
THAT'S ENERGIST? IT LOOKS LIKE GOLD!
BUT WHAT IS...?

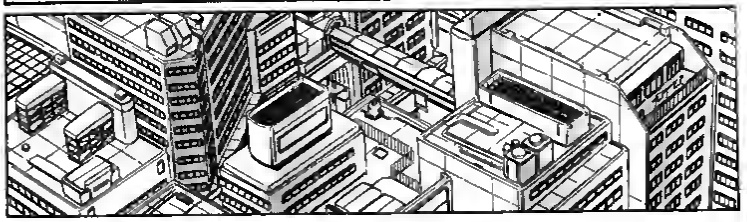
TH-THIS IS SPACE-TIME!
AH!
PRINCE VAN! IS HE ALL RIGHT?!
GAEA IS SAFE!
THE ARK HAS STOPPED MOVING!
EVERYTHING IS FADING..
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL DREAM.
SO YOU'RE GAEA
YOU'RE THE VERY SOUL OF THE PLANET.
I DREAMED OF A LIVING, BREATHING PLANET.
..ALL THIS WAS JUST A DREAM OF HERS?
DOES THAT MEAN...

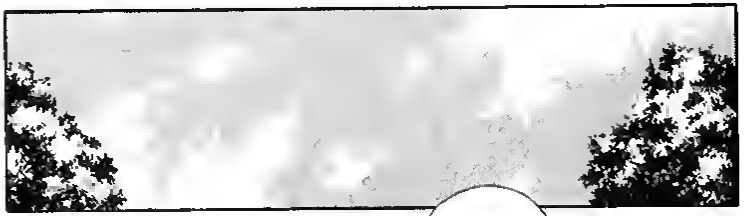
OH...

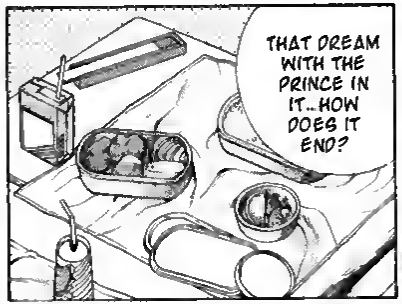

WELL, GAEA'S HEALING.


SHE'S USING HER POWER TO FIX HER BROKEN BODY.

GAEA'S SLOWLY BECOMING WHAT SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE.
YOU WERE RIGHT, HITOMI.

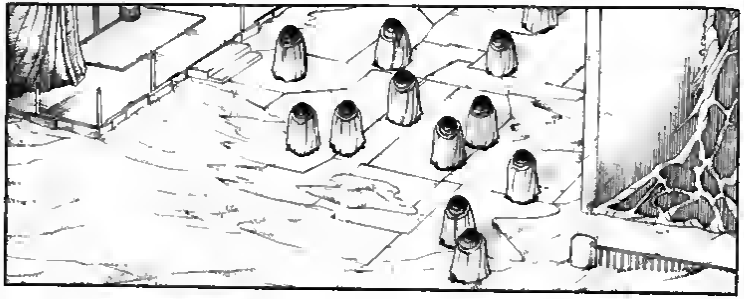


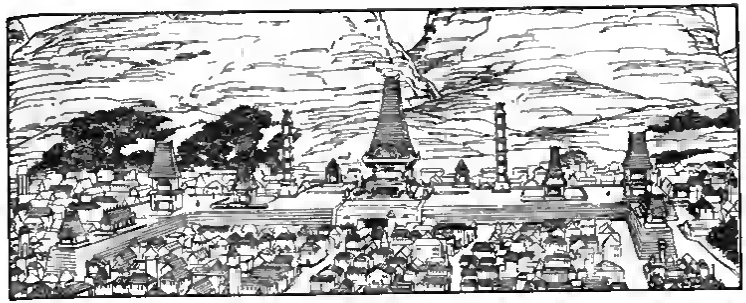


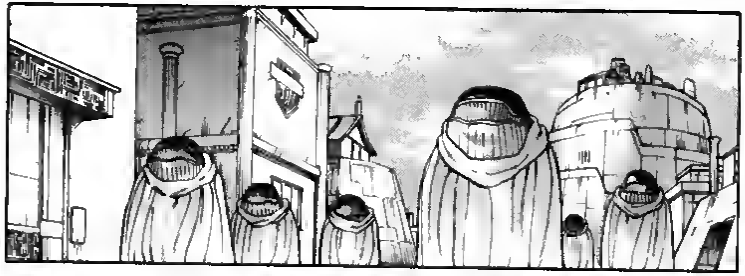

THAT DREAM WITH THE PRINCE IN IT..HOW DOES IT END?

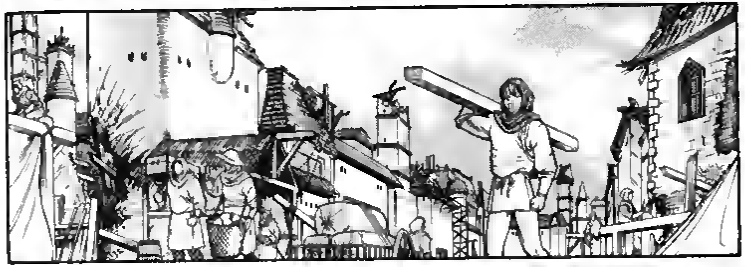
SO ANYWAYS, HITOMI.

SHIAN AND POKER HAVE BEEN HELPING ME REBUILD FANELIA.
CAN'T SAY THE SAME FOR THE REST OF US, THOUGH.
HE SAID GAEA'S ENERGIST SUPPLY WILL EVENTUALLY REPLENISH ITSELF, BUT IT'LL PROBABLY TAKE A WHILE.
LAGUSU SAID IT'S BECAUSE GAEA'S ENERGIST CORE HAS AWOKEN A FEW MONTHS AGO, I'D HAVE SAID HE WAS NUTS.
I THINK ESCAFLOWNE'S STILL ABSORBING SPACE-TIME STORMS. CLEARING THE ATMOSPHERE UP AND ALL THAT. IT SURE HAS MADE FOR SOME BEAUTIFUL SUNSETS.
AND ESCAFLOWNE? WELL, SHE STILL HASN'T MOVED FROM PARADAX.









YOU
WERE RIGHT,
HITOMI.

I THINK MY TIME WILL BE BETTER SPENT WORKING ON CHANGING MYSELF AFTER ALL, I'VE ALREADY CHANGED THE WORLD.
HEY!
I CAN STILL SEE IT, VAN!
GOD, I COULD NEVER FORGET.
VAN?
DO YOU THINK I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN SOMEDAY?
HUH?
SO, NOW WHAT?
ARE YOU GOING TO SPEND YOUR LIFE PINING FOR YOUR DREAM PRINCE? REMEMBER YOUR REALITY, CHICKIE
OH. I KNOW THAT.
YES.
HEE HEE!
GAEA'S NOT A FAILURE.
WE WERE SEARCHING FOR A SAVIOR, WHEN IN FACT, THE SAVIOR IS IN ALL OF US.

I THINK I UNDERSTAND.
IF THEY PASS BEYOND THEIR SENTIMENT, THEY CAN BE REBORN.
OORNKIRK AND OILANDAU.. THEY'RE LEADING THE LOST CHILDREN OF THE ARK
アハハ
アハハ

HITOMI!
HA HA!
AH HA HA!
アハハ
アハハ

STAFF

KATSU·AKI
KENJI TOMIHARI
MASAO ŌKAWA
OSAMU TANAKA
SYŪICHI KOBAYASHI
HISOYUKI AOI
YŌICHI ITŌ
TOSHIO TERASHIMA

FiN...

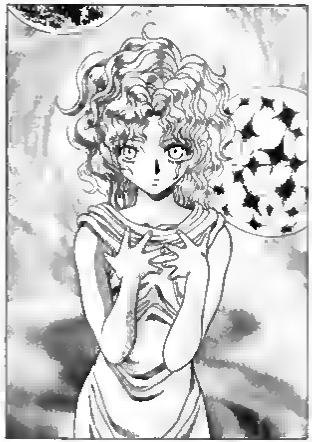
MM: When I had to check Katsu-san's names (layouts), it wasn't like work. I was getting a kick out of reading the manga.

KA: Usually a manga is developed by the manga-ka with input from the editors, but this time it was different. Loads of images and ideas came to me from every direction and I really enjoyed the process. I could tell we were giving birth to something unique. After all, both the anime and manga storylines were based on Kawamori-san's original concepts, but when you see the final versions, they look as if they came from totally different places.

SK: It was a lot of fun to see that happen as the story played out in different media. Of course, the manga could have steadfastly followed the original concept, but I thought it was better to let the manga develop on its own, utilizing manga storytelling methods. If that meant the story had to change, so be it. Besides, it would've been boring for me to see the same thing in two different mediums. I certainly wanted to avoid having one version seem like a rehash of the other.

"By having two Escaflownes developing simultaneously, we influenced each other. I enjoyed that process a lot." --Katsu Aki

"It was more like a jamming session for musicians." --Shoji Kawamori



KA: By having two Escaflownes developing simultaneously, we influenced each other. I enjoyed that process a lot.

SK: Ah, yes! Much of what we shared was unspoken, though. It was more like a jamming session for musicians. It was like continuously wondering what phrase would come out next.

MM: Yes, but it was hard not being able to get a hold of Kawamori-san for name checking sessions! (laughs) That interview on the aircraft carrier, for instance.

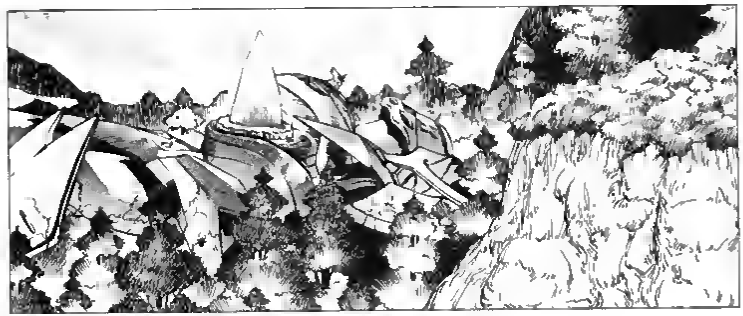
KA: And faxing those names to Italy.

SK: Hey, I was in Italy for Esca-related business! I went there for the music recording session and to draw rough drafts. I ended up doing three pages. (laughs) I wound up drawing ten on the aircraft carrier!

MM: While Kawamori-san was traveling, Director Sekine was struggling at his desk, screaming "That Kawamori!" on occasion. His anger is the driving force of his power, you know. (laughs)

A Fond Farewell

Escaflowne has woven a story of bravery and love over three long years. To commemorate its completion, the creators sat down to contemplate amongst themselves.



All: A job well done, everyone.

Katsu Aki: It's funny, this series started with the very first issue of Shonen Ace. It's not something you'd usually think of, but starting with a first issue is difficult because there's no way of knowing what kind of character the magazine will develop. I had to read the reaction of the readers and make necessary changes, and as Escaflowne ran, I had to alter the story's direction to make it different from the anime's.

Shoji Kawamori: Although I developed the anime's original story concept, I enjoyed experiencing the manga as a reader. It was a lot of fun.

Masahiko Minami: Indeed. We really enjoyed letting the manga version develop within Katsu-san's vision of the world. If his version was the same as the anime's, it would have lost its own creative charm, and ultimately both versions would have suffered.

SK: I was really surprised when Hitomi turned into a jewel in volume 1, you know.

KA: That concept took me a while to hatch up. You know, my first draft didn't have the robots showing up until later in the story, but the editors told me early on that I had to have robots in the first chapter. Without Hitomi's Energist body, the story wouldn't have progressed fast enough.

SK: It was a daring idea.

KA: I had to rack my brain to get Hitomi to Gaea so fast.

SK: That's why it was so exciting being a reader. "Oh, so that's how it works!" and "Hey, I get it!" That sort of thing. And then as soon as Hitomi returns to Gaea, she finds herself a prisoner of Zaibach. I thought it was brilliant. Really, it's quite different from the anime version.

SK: You know Director Sekine—he's the competitive type. (laughs)

MM: The manga series started about six months before the anime, but once the anime started, I remember all that trouble with Hitomi's last name? It changed! (laughs) And those glasses Hitomi wears in the manga?

SK: Due to Director Sekine's tastes, those were removed. (la.

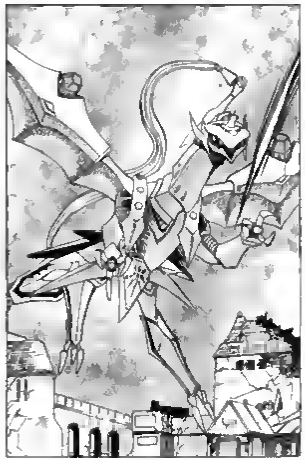
KA: It almost felt like the only thing about Hitomi that remained the same was her first name! Everything else changed from the original concept.

MM: Speaking of Hitomi, Maaya Sakamoto, the actress that voiced Hitomi in the anime, has started college.

SK: Wow! Already? I guess it has been three years.

"I bet you didn't expect the anime Esca to turn into a dragon, did you?" --Masahiko Minami

"That really taught me how difficult it is to work on a mixed media project." --Katsu Aki



MM: She was just a high school student when she worked on Esca. She grew up on us!

SK: This may have been the longest project I've ever worked on. I've changed where I live three times over the course of this production.

KA: I've moved, too.

SK: It can be dangerous to have a series that continues for three years. The cast just keeps growing and you get so attached to them all, you know?

KA: Very true. There were times when I had to eliminate some of the subplots. The last chapter was 17 pages longer than I had planned. And the painful thing is that my Escaflowne isn't finished yet! It's just so hard to conclude a story when all these characters are involved.

To all involved with the creation of *The Vision of Escaflowne*, thanks for eight great volumes of entertainment! And to the fans: a vision means nothing if there's no one there to witness it. Thanks for reading!

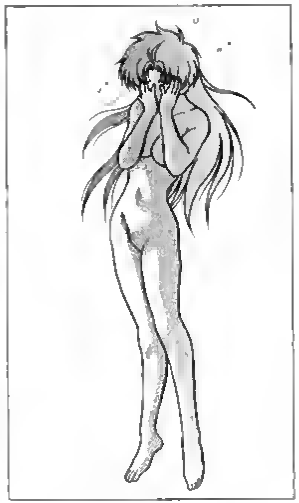
KA: During the name checks, I started work on another project! (laughs) I kept figuring, "Hmm, I probably have two more days before they find Kawamori-san."

MM: That aircraft carrier was out in the middle of the ocean! It was impossible to get in touch with... (laughs)

KA: I really appreciate that you developed the original designs for the Knight Machines in the manga, despite your crazy schedule.

SK: Oh no, it was nothing. I should be apologizing for my delay.

MM: By the way, Katsu-san, you said you agreed to work on Esca only because an upperclassman from college asked you to. (laughs)



KA: (laughs) That's my reigning excuse.

MM: The way you say it makes me sound like a horrible guy. Although, I must admit I am. (laughs) Come to think of it, another upperclassman of yours was Kazuhiko Shimamoto. (Ed. note: Shimamoto-san is the manga-ka currently working on the series "Red Card" for Shonen Ace.) You know, his family runs a bookstore that also rents videos. I recently visited there and saw his store doesn't carry the Esca video! (laughs)

Anyhow, at the beginning of the series I bet you didn't expect the anime Esca to turn into a dragon, did you? (laughs)

KA: That really taught me how difficult it is to work on a mixed media project. When I first saw the anime, I was shocked by the high quality of the art. I wondered if it was okay to have so much detail.

SK: Suicidal behavior, isn't it? (laughs)

KA: When you start with such high-quality art, the audience gets used to it and comes to expect it. That makes it real difficult later on. (laughs)

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FAREWELL!

Aki Katsu

Aki Katsu was born on Sept. 19th. His zodiac symbol is the Maiden (Virgo) and his blood type is O. Aki-san made his manga debut by winning first place in the 12th Shogakukan New Comic Competition in 1983. His other works include *Karasu: Mandala Charm Master, Stardust Paradise, Great Dragon Chronicles Saurus Knight and Psychic Academy* (available from TOKYOPOP.)

Finally, the last volume!!

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